A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

CHRISTIAN UNION:

The Subſtance of which was delivered

BEFORE

The Reverend CONVENTION

OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL CLERGY

In the Colony

OF

RHODE-ISLAND;

Aſſembled at BRISTOL

April 23, 1760.

By EZRA STILES, A. M.

PASTOR of the ſecond Congregational Church in NEWPORT.

Thy FATHERS went down into Egypt with three-ſcore and ten Perſons, and now the Lord thy GOD hath made thee as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude. DEUT. X. 22.

Four Thouſand Britiſh Planters ſettled NEW-ENGLAND, and in 120 Years their Poſterity are increaſed to five hundred thouſand Souls.

BOSTON: N. E.

Printed and Sold by EDES and GILL, MDCCLXI.

DISCOURSE

ON THE

CHRISTIAN UNION:

DELIVERED

BEFORE

THE CONGREGATIONAL CLERGY

OF

RHODE-ISLAND;

AT THE

ANNUAL CONVENTION,

IN THE COLONY

HOUSE,

IN NEWPORT,

ON

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1791.

BY

SAMUEL HOPKINS, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN NEWPORT.

NEWPORT, RHODE-ISLAND:

PRINTED BY SOLOMON SOUTHWICK.

M,DCC,XCI.

THE CHRISTIAN UNION.

PHILIPPIANS III. 16.

Nevertheleſs, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame Rule, let us mind the ſame Thing.

WHILE Paul continued at Rome the ſaints of Philippi raiſed a gratuity for his relief, and ſent Epaphroditus to preſent it to their ſuffering apoſtle. Epaphroditus, after a dangerous ſickneſs, returning home to Philippi, St. Paul ſent by him this letter of thanks to that beneficent aſſembly of chriſtians, who had liberally contributed to his relief. Tho' this incident was the occaſion of this epiſtle, yet the apoſtle takes this opportunity to impart ſome good gifts to them of a ſpiritual nature, in return for their affection and temporal relief. Beſides ſome elucidations and bright touches on the peculiar doctrines of the chriſtian faith, doctrines however common to the church univerſal in all ages; and beſides ſome incidental reflexions on the then preſent ſtate of the chriſtian cauſe;—he interſperſes the whole with obſervations adapted to the peculiar ſtate of things at Philippi. If we conſider this, it will very much aſſiſt us

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in underſtanding the ſeveral parts of this epiſtle. And indeed we ſhall find the apoſtle in all his letters has a general eye to the particular circumſtances of the church or perſon to whom he writes—and many ſentences and alluſions are reſtricted by theſe views. His moſt extenſive deſign, in all his epiſtles, was to confirm the faithful: to which end he attentively inſpected the ſtate of the churches, and according to their different exigences, he imparted his ſpiritual advice and apoſtolic exhortation.

The ſaints at Philippi were united in a good opinion of ſaint Paul, their ſpiritual father, and paid a high regard to his dictates and advice, whether given by inſpiration, or his own private judgment. And he made uſe of this influence, not to aggrandize himſelf, but to ſerve the cauſe of the redeemer, by ſettling and reconciling differences and animoſities, by cultivating that fellowſhip and union; which being enlarged to the comprehenſion of a numerous body of chriſtians, was appointed to ſucceed the miraculous powers in ſupporting and diffuſing chriſtianity through the world. God's ways are conſummately wiſe. In the infancy of the goſpel, the miraculous powers ſubſerved two ends, the *ſupport* and *evidence*, or verification, of chriſtianity. And having demonſtrably atteſted the cauſe, and ſupernaturally upheld it againſt all oppoſition, till it had formed ſuch an intereſt among men, as, being cemented by the noble principle of union and benevolence, it might ſupport and propagate itſelf in a natural way, theſe powers were gradually withdrawn, when effectual care had been taken for the ſecurity of the goſpel. The tranſmitting of it therefore in ſome meaſure devolved itſelf on its converts, under the all-controlling, over-ruling providence of heaven. Tho' God accompliſhes his moral, as well as natural ends, by ſecondary cauſes and ſubordinate means; yet there is room for the concurrent agency of theſe cauſes—and hence we are to work together with God. The apoſtles took early care, as the number of the faithful increaſed,

increaſed, to recommend this uſeful principle of union and benevolence, which, cementing the body of believers, ſhould in due time form an impregnable *eſprit du corps* to ſuccede the ſupernatural effuſions of the divine ſpirit, and co-operate with God in carrying on and ſupporting the ſame great deſign. Even in the infancy of the churches—while being too ſmall to form reſpectable unions; and conſequently while yet they could not ſee and feel the immediate uſe which was afterwards to be made of the heavenly principles of *love* and *forgiveneſs* taught by their divine maſter:—The apoſtles carefully watched this principle, took peculiar care to implant and cultivate it, and uſed apoſtolic authority in recommending it.

And as the church multiplied, they were very attentive to extinguiſh animoſities and heal differences, in one part and another: which aroſe, not from the nature of the chriſtian inſtitution, but from partial underſtanding of it, and from early imbibed prejudices, not at once to be worn off, and which the apoſtles treated with the utmoſt tenderneſs and wiſdom. Beſides what were incidental to particular churches, there were other miſtakes of greater extent. The Jews were diſperſed throughout the Roman empire, and ſettled in great numbers in Greece, Macedonia, and around the Archipelago. And though chriſtianity never made any great impreſſion on the body of that people, yet a few in almoſt every place became converts. Theſe few nevertheleſs occaſioned a very capital controverſy, not eaſily ſettled by apoſtolic authority, which takes up ſome part of almoſt every book of the new-teſtament, except the evangeliſts: a controverſy, which, being differently apprehended by chriſtians of ſucceeding ages, has given birth to polemical divinity or controverſy on the doctrines of faith. The few Jewiſh converts did at firſt receive Jeſus Chriſt as the Meſſiah on the evidence of his *reſurrection* chiefly and other *miracles*, and partly in *fulfilment of prophecy*: but did not imagine that either *circumciſion*

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or the *law* was to be aboliſhed. They therefore uſed their endeavours to bring the Gentile chriſtians to the law; and though they received Chriſt, yet their great dependance was on the law: They accordingly truſted for acceptance and juſtification to the works of the law, of more importance with them than that *righteouſneſs which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.* There were other Jewiſh converts, who tho' they did not lay the chief ſtreſs on the deeds of the law, yet thought the obſervance of it neceſſary, truſting nevertheleſs in the atonement of Chriſt, and preferring the righteouſneſs by faith. The former were dangerous, being really enemies to the croſs of Chriſt: the latter were tolerable, and might ſafely be received into the fellowſhip of the goſpel; it was neceſſary to act in ſteady oppoſition to the one, with the utmoſt condeſcention and humanity to the other.

The body of *hebrew chriſtians* from the beginning retained *circumciſion* and *the law*, which St. Paul had declared to be right for them, though not for the *gentile chriſtians.* With difficulty the apoſtle kept them united in his day: but ſoon after his death the Hebrew converts broke off all charity and communion with the Gentile converts, becauſe the latter would not obſerve *circumciſion* and the *law.* They were long after diſtinguiſhed and known by the name of *Nazarene*, or circumciſed, chriſtians. The *Copti* chriſtians *circumciſe* to this day. *Joſephus* the hiſtorian is ſaid to have at laſt joined himſelf to thoſe *believing Jews*, who about his time broke off all communication with the *believing Gentiles. Epiphanius* was acquainted with them, A. D. 370, and called them *heretics*, "for no other reaſon that I can perceive, but that they together with their chriſtian faith, continued the uſe of *circumciſion* and the jewiſh *law*; which is a thing St. Paul never blamed in a *jewiſh chriſtian.*" He might have cenſured St. James and thoſe thouſands of the Jeruſalem

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and Galilee chriſtians for hereticks, concerning whom St. James ſaid to St. Paul, Acts 21. 20. *Thou ſeeſt, brother, how many thouſands of Jews there are, which* BELIEVE, *and they are* ALL *zealous of the* LAW.

This controverſy had affected the church at Philippi; and perhaps Euodias and Syntiche might be Jewiſh converts, and very much at the head of it; the apoſtle ſays, with reſpect to thoſe who were the moſt crafty and indefatigable in proſelyting the Gentile chriſtians to the ceremonial, pompous, burdenſome inſtitution of Moſes, *beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the conciſion*; which plainly ſhews they were in danger from the quarter of which I have been ſpeaking. The apoſtle therefore exhorts them to beware, to take heed, to be on their guard with reſpect to thoſe teachers who enjoin circumciſion, the ceremonial rites, the obſervation of Jewiſh holy-days, new-moons, and other feſtivals, and *place the eſſence of chriſtianity in theſe things.* And he takes occaſion to produce his own example in evidence—by which it appeared that he had been in every reſpect a Hebrew, ſtood complete in that righteouſneſs which was of the law: but ſince his ſoul had been enlightened with the invaluable diſcoveries of the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus, he counted all his boaſted attainments in judaiſm as a trifle, deſiring henceforward to be found in Chriſt, not having on his own righteouſneſs, which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt. Having entirely broke off from judaiſm, being convinced that it was ſuperceded by a more perfect and ſublime and ſpiritual inſtitution, he preſſed forward to perfection in Chriſt—and being deſirous to unite as many as poſſible with him, he was willing to walk *together* with his brethren the Hebrew chriſtians *as far as they had attained*, who ſincerely believed in Chriſt, yet thought themſelves obliged to obſerve the law. If they placed their dependance on Chriſt for acceptance, they might be indulged their peculiar affection

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for the obſervance of their law, provided they would be content that the Gentile converts ſhould be at liberty on theſe matters; it being far better for thoſe that agreed in eſſentials, to live in harmony and fellowſhip, than under the moſt ſpecious pretexts to reſolve themſelves into fruitleſs, undeterminable controverſy and alienation. And then the apoſtle introduces this general advice, equally applicable to all, whether Jewiſh or Gentile converts, ſo far as they had attained, to walk by the ſame rule, and mind the ſame thing. This harmony would cement them into a reſpectable body, and perfect them in that benevolence and chriſtian charity, without which they were nothing.

Having thus finiſhed the neceſſary illuſtration of the text; I proceed to what I had principally in view, the application of it to us, my brethren, of the *congregational* denomination, as well in New-England in general, as the particular diſtrict of this colony. And in order to procede clearly, and perceive that the principle of union recommended in the text, may be applicable and take place among our churches, I ſhall

I. Enumerate ſome of thoſe fundamental principles of chriſtianity and eccleſiaſtical polity, in which our churches are generally agreed.

II. I ſhall mention ſome things on which we differ in opinion, or are ſuppoſed to differ; and ſhew that this difference need not to obſtruct the general harmony and union—and that theſe ſuppoſed differences might be greatly leſſened by benevolent and honorable conceſſions. And

III. Subjoin ſome reaſons, taken from the importance of the common cauſe, and the preſent ſtate of our churches, to ſhew the wiſdom and advantage of union and good fellowſhip, both among the miniſters and the churches.

I. I ſhall enumerate ſome of the fundamental principles of revelation in which we are generally agreed. I ſhall not confine myſelf to thoſe things which congregationaliſts particularly agree in—but ſhall have occaſion to mention

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ſeveral things in which we have the happineſs to agree with the proteſtant churches throughout the world; as well as others more peculiar to our own denomination.

1. We agree in the being and character of God. The author of the univerſe is himſelf underived and independent:—a being of abſolute excellence and dignity, eternally happy and glorious of himſelf:—a being but imperfectly apprehended, known but in part by man:—a being in himſelf poſſeſſed of all poſſible perfection in a degree incomprehenſible by our limited apprehenſions; having beſides thoſe, whoſe illuſtrations we have the honor of perceiving, perhaps many perfections unknown to us. The diſplays of Deity to our little world lead our contemplations to four diſtinctions of perfection, which yet may be but one principle in the divine eſſence, I mean *omnipotence, wiſdom, goodneſs, mercy.* His wiſdom implies *omniſcience* and perſonal rectitude with reſpect to himſelf:—With regard to the production and government of a ſuppoſed dependent creation, his infinite wiſdom muſt diſcern and project and execute the wiſeſt and beſt plan of a univerſe;—*wiſeſt* becauſe infinite diſcernment muſt perceive the only one, than which there is not another wiſer, and in which the moſt complicated various and noble ends are accompliſhed in the ſhorteſt manner, according to the feweſt ſimpleſt general laws;—*wiſeſt* becauſe admitting all poſſible ſubordinations and variety of action, happineſs and ſocial connexion;—therefore laſtly, *wiſeſt* and *beſt*, becauſe moſt declarative of the divine glory, and eventually productive of the greateſt quantity of the univerſal happineſs.—— I ſay, *divine wiſdom*, of ſyſtems poſſible, muſt chuſe that beſt one, which *omnipotence* prompted by infinite *goodneſs* might give exiſtence to and perpetuate. We view the Deity at the head of the moral ſyſtem as exerciſing a ſuperintendant moral government, ſupreme dominion, all-controlling and everlaſting *providence.* And tho' the divine complacency be

apportioned to the degrees of native or acquired excellence of every order and every individual; yet impartial equity takes place in the divine diſpenſations and conduct towards all the ſubordinations of being from infinite to nothing. This ſuggeſts the idea of divine *juſtice*, founded in and flowing from infinite wiſdom, which, with reſpect to the unhappy beings who tranſgreſs the laws of eternal order, is exerciſed in connecting eventual puniſhment with unamending impenitence. The exerciſe of goodneſs to a revolted world is *mercy*:—which, as the univerſe muſt be a production very generally virtuous and right, is exerciſed that we know of towards no part of the creation, but this unhappy region which we inhabit. This general idea of the Deity and his character I ſuppoſe we are agreed in.

2. That notwithſtanding God created this, as he did all other worlds, in order and rectitude, yet that we are now in a fallen and univerſally depraved ſtate. I truly take this principle to be very generally agreeable to the opinion of our churches—however individuals may differ as to the origin and deſert of moral evil. Some may attribute it to vicious example, ſome to the diſorder of our external ſtate, or the animal part of man, ſome to a principle of pollution born in us, and derived from Adam. But however we may vary in our opinions as to the cauſe of the preſent reigning univerſal depravity; yet two things I ſuppoſe we agree in with reſpect to it—one, that no blame is to be aſcribed to God as the author of it; the other, that it is fact. Obſervation on the ſtate of the world for 6000 years, or the review of it in hiſtory, ſhew that in fact diſorder and vicious principle are predominant and reign with great ſtrength in human nature. The univerſality of the effect ſhews a tendency and proclivity in our nature at preſent, howevever derived there; a proclivity which may be termed a characteriſtic or general principle of our preſent nature; even on allowance of

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the ſuppoſed exceptions, which in my opinion are not to be admitted, ſince this vicious principle has not been in fact controlled by the philoſophers or their wiſeſt moral ſyſtems, but has raged in the moſt enlightened and improved nations, more than among the ſavages themſelves. From which there is reaſon to ſuſpect that no one of the human race is deſtitute of it. Our ſouls may come out of the hands of God pure and unpolluted, and the pollution take place upon our entering this ſtate. Nor is it the reſult of perſonal action alone: it may perhaps be impoſſible for an innocent and unexperienced mind, commencing its infant exiſtence in a polluted world, not to be very ſoon affected with the contagion. The great Mr. *Locke* has reſembled the infant mind to a raſa tabula, as he expreſſes it, a clean piece of paper, with no inſcriptions, tho' ſuſceptible of them. This is equally true of internal propenſities, as of acquiſitions in knowledge. Some indeed ſuppoſe or ſpeak, as if they ſuppoſed that the pure and holy God infuſed into the ſoul at its firſt creation, and on its entrance into the world, the impure and unholy propenſities both of fleſh and ſpirit, which we find to have uſurped the governing poſſeſſion of us by the time we become capable of moral action; and conſequently that our natures, as they come out of the hand of the benevolent creator, are corrupt, impure and unholy. But the learned preſident EDWARDS has aſſerted, that the doctrine of original ſin, according to the ſenſe and explication of the moſt orthodox divines, implies no ſuch thing:—— but that, we coming pure out of the hands of God, our impurity and moral defilement is altogether conſequential upon our entrance into this world. I beg leave to ſubjoin his own words. Dr. *Taylor* ſuppoſes, ſays he, "the "doctrine of original ſin to imply that nature muſt be "corrupted by ſome *poſitive influence*; ſomething by "ſome means or other *infuſed* into the human nature; "ſome *quality* or other, not from the choice of our

" minds but like a *teint, tincture* or *infection*, altering the " natural conſtitution, faculties & diſpoſitions of our ſouls: " —that ſin and evil diſpoſitions are implanted in the " fætus in the womb." ' Whereas truly our doctrine, ſays ' Mr. *Edwards*, neither implies nor infers any ſuch thing. ' In order to account for a ſinful corruption of nature, ' yea a total native depravity of heart, there is not the leaſt ' need of ſuppoſing any evil quality *infuſed, implanted,* ' or *wrought* into the nature of man, by any *poſitive* cauſe ' or influence whatſoever, either from God or the creature: ' or of ſuppoſing that man is conceived and born with a ' *fountain of evil* in his heart, ſuch as is any thing properly ' poſitive. I think a little attention to the nature of things ' will be ſufficient to ſatisfy any impartial, conſiderate in- ' quirer, that the abſence of *poſitive good* principles, and ' ſo the with-holding of a ſpecial divine influence to im- ' part and maintain theſe good principles, leaving the com- ' mon natural principle of ſelf-love, natural appetite, &c. ' (which were in man in innocence) leaving theſe, I ſay, ' to themſelves, without the government of ſuperior, divine ' principles, will certainly be followed with the corrup- ' tion, yea the total corruption of the heart, without occa- ' ſion of any poſitive influence at all: and that it was thus ' indeed that corruption of nature came on Adam imme- ' diately on his fall, and comes on all his poſterity, as ' ſinning in him, and falling with him.' * Theſe obſer- vations appear to me to be very juſt. On which we may remark that this author aſſerts, that no " evil quality" is " *infuſed, implanted,* or *wrought* into the nature of " man by any *poſitive* cauſe or influence whatſoever, " either from God or the creature:" And that there is no need of " ſuppoſing that man is conceived and born " with a *fountain of evil* in his heart." Our ſouls were all created by God pure and without ſtain, (with leſs perfecti- on indeed than had Adam ſucceſsfully ſuſtained the fæde- ral

* Edwards's Anſ. to Taylor, p. 316.

ral trial,) but entering a corrupted and diſordered ſtate, deſtitute of a poſitive propenſity to holineſs, tho' with no poſitive propenſity to ill, the latter immediately takes place in our natures, and by the time we arrive to the years of moral diſcretion, we find ourſelves one and all to have fallen a ſacrifice to pollution. Jehovah could have implanted in us a propenſity or tendency to virtue of ſufficient ſtrength to overcome the corruption of this ſtate—but he has not done it. The ſuppoſed inſtinctive love of virtue, and the impulſes of the moral ſenſe, are evidently too weak for eventual ſecurity. Why God did not infuſe a controlling propenſity to holineſs is to be reſolved into his ſovereignty and unfathomable councils; which might with great juſtice, and agreeable to the analogy of nature and daily experience, take occaſion from Adam's offence, to with-hold from his poſterity a favor which he had granted to Adam himſelf, and moſt probably had perpetuated to his poſterity on the obedience of their fæderal head. This is an intricate ſubject—the reconciling the permiſſion of moral and natural ill with the perfections of God—let it be brought about in what manner ſoever, ſince he had power to have prevented it. If therefore we ſhould differ in our manner of accounting for it, and even if we ſhould miſconceive the ſcripture account of its origin (in which I apprehend it is clearly defined), and yet agree in the fact that diſorder and moral depravity now reign in this part of God's univerſe, to a degree uncontrollable by man, perhaps we ſhall agree in the main thing.

3. I take it that we further agree that it is beyond the power of man to recover and ſave himſelf. Methinks a little attentive view of our ſtate might convince us not only that there is no probability, but that there is an abſolute impoſſibility of this worlds emerging from its diſorder, and recovering its original rectitude of itſelf. A ſpectator from yonder diſtant dominions of Jehovah might look down upon this world, and pronounce it utterly loſt

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and undone beyond any poſſibility of ſelf-recovery. He might ſee the principle of moral rectitude, even ſuppoſe it not quite extinct, yet ſo embarraſſed as not poſſibly to regain its dominion. In this attempt the moſt enlightned and poliſhed heathen nations, Greece and Rome, as well as the modern refiners in reaſoning, have intirely failed. And as no general ſucceſsful reformation, either of the moral principle or practice, is ever to be expected from mankind conſidered as a collective body, while in a ſtate of nature unenlightened by a ſupernatural revelation; ſo there is but too much reaſon to believe the ſame thing holds true of individuals. And if we ſhould be inclined to make an exception in favor of the pagan nations, we muſt have recourſe to the effect of the diſpenſation of grace, thro' which, tho' unknown to them, the ſpirit might regenerate a principle of holineſs in them.* But even this would ſhew that nature alone is utterly impotent to this great change. With reſpect therefore to the recovery of the principle of holineſs, as well as the extirpation of the principle of pollution, our nature left to itſelf is intirely impotent.

But towards our ſalvation, there is neceſſary another thing which I ſuppoſe we all agree is abſolutely beyond human power, even in full perfection, I mean rendering atonement for ſin. The œconomy of the kingdom of grace, and the deſignation of the ſon of God to the ſovereignty of this world, the introduction of the offers of mercy, the exhibition of an example of perfect virtuous practice under all its embarraſſment, the opening and ſetting up this kingdom; infinite wiſdom it ſeems ſaw could not be effected without that humiliation of the ſon of God, his mediatorial obedience and vicarious ſufferings, on which the diſpenſation of grace is meritoriouſly founded. This ſhews us that without the divine ſupernatural interpoſition, the world was abſolutely loſt and undone. The

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* Patten's Apology. p. 16.

true nature of atonement is perhaps but imperfectly apprehended by us:—but methinks we might all ſee that, in whatever it conſiſts, it is a thing beyond human power to render. Is it not blaſphemy for a depraved helpleſs being to ſay he can do aught of himſelf which ſhall merit pardon of an offended God? Could he be perfect for the future, nay perform an overplus of virtue of merit equal to the demerit of his offences, yet on the foot of juſtice he could have no demand on the ſovereign mercy of God. Divine juſtice is not thus to be bought and ſold. But even Adam in innocence could perform no works of ſupererrogation, or more than his duty: and ſhall his impotent ſons profanely boaſt that they can atchieve a ſurplus of holineſs for the ſatisfaction of divine juſtice? And conſequently could we be ſuppoſed to have power to become holy the reſt of our lives, there remains a load of paſt ſins uncancelled, undiſcharged, whoſe penalties we are liable to.

It is beyond our power then to lay the foundation of our redemption, which Jeſus Chriſt has laid in the propitiatory ſacrifice of himſelf. Equally unable are we, without the divine aſſiſtance, to thoſe terms and conditions appointed to be found in us, towards our receiving the atonement and becoming entitled to the bleſſings of this ſacrifice. Otherwiſe the illuminations of the holy Ghoſt had not been by infinite wiſdom judged neceſſary to accompliſh on the human mind the great work of *conviction*, *repentance*, *faith*, and *regeneration*. As the *atonement* is the foundation of our diſcharge from the future penalties of moral evil; ſo *faith* is the appointed condition of limiting the atonement to us; and *renovation* of nature is neceſſary to the enjoyment of the future bleſſedneſs. Had I time I might enlarge on the deſcription of this divine principle, its formation and exerciſe, as it affects our ſpiritual powers and paſſions, which are directed, reſtricted to and placed upon new moral objects, new purſuits, new enjoyments,

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4. We agree that JESUS CHRIST is the great redeemer, and that he is God as well as man—in a word, we agree in the doctrines of the divinity and atonement of Jeſus Chriſt. We agree in our idea of his perſon, offices and mediation. However we may differ in explaining the myſteries of the hypoſtatic union, yet we agree in the divinity of Chriſt to all practical purpoſes—particularly in his *omnipotence*; and that religious honor and *divine worſhip* are to be aſcribed to the ſon, believing it to be the will of heaven *that all men honor the ſon, even as they do the father.* We believe him according to the ſcriptures to be the ſecond perſon in the ever-adorable trinity, the brightneſs of the father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon:—that he is the eternal ſon of God, the only begotten of his father, full of grace and truth; for in him dwelt the godhead bodily:—that he is the eternal logos, who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made that was made;—that to him is committed all power in heaven and earth, who therefore is God over all bleſſed forever:—that his ſubordination in order of trinity is conſiſtent with perfect equality to the father, that ſo he and the father are one, partaking in and enjoying the ſame eſſential glories and perfections:—that he dwelt in eternal glory with the father before the world was;—that though he laid aſide the peculiar glories of divinity which he enjoyed in the boſom of the father upon his condeſcending to appear in our nature; yet when he dwelt with us, he was God manifeſt in the fleſh, the repreſentative and true exemplification of Deity, particularly in his perfections of *wiſdom, infallibility* and *omnipotence.* Whence it appears that he was all-ſufficient to the great undertaking, the work of redemption.

On the foreſight of the apoſtacy of man and his helpleſs ruin, the eternal ſon is repreſented as ſaying to the father, "Lo! here am I, ready to do thy will, O God! ready

" on the part of mankind to perform that for their re-
" demption, which is neceſſary to be rendered to thy di-
" vine juſtice, and which they are totally unable to ren-
" der;—ready to undertake, to ſuffer, and execute all
" that the ſovereignty of thy adminiſtration demands,
" both as to atoning for their revolt, and recovering them
" to obedience and filial ſubmiſſion to thy will." In conſequence of this eternal covenant between the father and the ſon, Jeſus the great Emanuel laid aſide the glory he had with the father, humbled himſelf to appear in our nature, and performed that ſcene of illuſtrious obedience and ſuffering, which, in the counſels of heaven, was ſtipulated the meritorious foundation of deriving the moſt ineſtimable bleſſings to the true believer. He rendered complete atonement for ſin in the ſacrifice of himſelf—brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs—publiſhed the joyful tidings of pardon and reconciling grace—gave a moſt wiſe and heavenly inſtitution of morals—brought life and immortality to light through his goſpel—appointed the baptiſmal and ſacramental rites—commiſſioned his diſciples, and then aſcended to the Father's preſence, where he now exerciſes the interceſſorial part of his mediation, and will continue to exerciſe it till he ſhall return and take upon him the more open and immediate dominion of the virtuous.

5. We agree in the influences and operations of the ſpirit, the third perſon in the adorable trinity concerned in man's redemption, whoſe more immediate province is the application of this redemption to the ſoul. Jeſus Chriſt having begun this good work, does not deſert it. Had he forſaken it after his leaving the world, it had proved abortive. He ſowed the good ſeed in one part of the great field of the world, and leaves it to propagate and ſpread as the ſpirit breaks up the fallow ground, and prepares one nation after another to receive it. The ſame thing is to be done for individuals as for nations: Tho' evangelical truth is of a regenerating influence when

brought home to the ſoul, or as Lord *Bacon* expreſſes it, "to our boſoms;" yet the human mind is to be firſt prepared and ſoftened to the genial impreſſions of truth, which would be inefficacious alone. By an acceſs to, and operation on, the human intellect, which we cannot define, the ſpirit, as we are informed by revelation, diſpels the miſts which becloud and darken the underſtanding; and, being duly attended to, leads us to diſcern and feel the force of the truth as it is in Jeſus. And thus he brings the ſoul, after a previous moral proceſs, to two great principles, diſtinct in their nature and connexions, though inſeparably conjoined in the ſoul of a chriſtian, I mean, ſaving *faith* and the principle of *regeneration* we have been ſpeaking of. By the one I mean, not the lax indefinite faith of a ſuperficial education, tho' this muſt be allowed to have had a good effect upon the world;—not the curſory belief, or rather non-disbelief, of Jeſus and his religion, with which debauchees and devils *believe, tremble,* and *ſin* away;—and leaſt of all, not that deiſtical faith by which we aſſent equally to the dictates of Jeſus, of Plato, of Ariſtotle, of Mahomet, and Bolingbroke, and to neither as ſupernaturally authorized to inſtruct and govern man:—but, beſides the honeſt and ſober belief of revelation in general, I mean the affiance of the ſoul in Jeſus Chriſt; that act of the human mind, by which, in conſequence of our being intirely convinced that Jeſus is appointed our redeemer and king, we humbly accept and ſubmit to him as ſuch—that act by which the ſoul, from a ſenſe of its loſt ſtate and inability to ſave itſelf, full of the raviſhing views of the all-ſufficiency of Jeſus, and the benevolent invitations of the goſpel, humbly comes to Chriſt, repairs to him as the ark of ſafety, receives and embraces and lays hold on him as the only hope ſet before it, in virtue of whoſe propitiation and meritorious righteouſneſs alone it truſts for acceptance with the father. The other principle I mentioned was *regeneration*, in

which

which the ſoul in all its powers and affections is purified, refined and created anew in Chriſt Jeſus: a love and complacency in virtue is generated, a ſtrong prevalent and governing affection for holineſs, a prevailing tendency to moral rectitude: in a word, a ſpark of the divine nature is infuſed and lights up the principle of divine love and benevolence, that diſtinguiſhing part of the moral image of God in which he created man. Theſe principles, *faith* and *regeneration*, are ſupported thro' the whole courſe of the religious life, by the ſame energies of the holy ſpirit that at firſt formed them. Again,

6. I ſuppoſe we are further agreed in the conſequences and connexions of theſe two principles—the one in governing a holy life, and exemplifying or rather diverſifying itſelf in all the graces and ornaments of the moral behavior:—the other in our *juſtification*, or intitling us, not by way of merit, but according to the conſtitution of grace, to all the benefits of the mediatorial atonement.

Faith is the appointed term in us which limits and appropriates the atonement. But it muſt be ſincere, unfeigned, and attended with a holy life. *He that believes ſhall be ſaved.* It is through faith that we become ſo united to the meritorious redeemer, as to receive and ſhare in the benefits of his moſt illuſtrious virtue:—which, beſides a diſcharge from puniſhment, entitles to ineſtimable glories, priviledges and happineſs, over and above the peculiar rewards which God will graciouſly beſtow on our perſonal virtue & holineſs—Theſe laſt are intirely diſtinct from the high privileges and glorious beatifying dignity and advancement, which are derived to believers on account of their connexion with ſuch an illuſtrious perſonage in the moral world, as the eternal ſon of God. *Thus they that receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs, ſhall reign in life by one Jeſus Chriſt.* To theſe glories juſtification opens the way. In the ſcriptures it is connected, with the principle of regeneration, not with its ſubſe-

quent holy life, but with *faith* only: not that faith is alone, but however attended with other good principles, it is faith only with which juſtification is connected. This is the appointed term, which, being found in us, enſeals our redemption, on our part compleats our title to all the benefits of the mediatorial obedience. There are indeed ſome different apprehenſions among us on this ſubject. We all agree that Chriſt is the great propitiation:——we do not place the propitiation in *faith* or *good works*. The only queſtion then is, what is the condition and appointed term *in us* which entitles us to the benefits and fruits of Chriſt's righteouſneſs? It is agreed on all hands, that whatever it is, it is not however meritorious; nor is the connexion between this term and receiving the atonement ſo neceſſary as to preclude the ſovereignty of grace. Now to this condition, whatever it is, as well as to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and the grace of God, the ſcripture indifferently gives the appellation "*juſtifying*." The apoſtle Paul ſpeaking of this conditional term in us, ſays, "being juſtified by *faith*:"—St. James ſpeaking of the conditional term ſays, "ye ſee then how by *works* a man is juſtified, and not by faith only:"—the apoſtle ſpeaking of the procuring cauſe and meritorious foundation of juſtification ſays, "being juſtified by his *blood*:"—ſpeaking of the ſource and origen of it in the ſovereign and free mercy of God, he ſays, "being juſtified freely by his *grace* through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt." It is to be obſerved, that the Hebrew chriſtians truſted for juſtification to the works of the law. In oppoſition to this, the apoſtles endeavoured to bring them off from this vain truſt, to place their ſole dependance on Chriſt's atonement and ſacrifice once for all—teaching them that faith was the only term of being entitled to the benefits of this atonement, without the deeds of the Moſaic law. Some Gentile converts ſeeing ſo much ſtreſs laid on *faith*, and neglect of the *law*, forgot the diſtinction between the temporary and already abrogated laws

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of Moſes, and the perpetuity of the moral law, and ſo ran into the extreme of truſting to faith alone, and by itſelf. This is the error ſaint James corrects, by ſhewing that *faith being alone is dead;* and that it is only ſuch a living faith as influences to virtue, which is juſtifying. Not that faith is to be truſted to as meriting juſtification, any more than the good works it produces. To rectify ſtill further this early abuſe of faith, the apoſtle calls up the chief attention to a holy life or good works, not to the works of the law, but of evangelical obedience, and ſpeaks of them as a condition of juſtification joyntly with faith. It is evident indeed that a life of good acts is preferable in point of excellence and value, to the one ſingle good act of faith: but as real faith opens the virtuous life, and determines the future tendency of the character, infinite wiſdom has ſeen fit to make it on our part the characteriſtic condition or term of juſtification. Theſe things do not bow to our reaſon, much leſs to our revieries. The proper and indeed only queſtion is, what ſaith the ſcripture? What is the term and condition preſcribed by God? If faith, or good works, ſeparately or conjunctly—we are to ſubmit. By good works it is to be remembred we agree to underſtand a *holy and godly life*, a life *governed by a real principle of grace;* and whether this good and pious life, or the faith which is the baſis of it, be the term of juſtification is the inquiry? And the doubt in this age ariſes from the miſconception of a controverſy in the apoſtolic age. We apply what the apoſtle ſpake of the ceremonial temporary law of Moſes, to the eternal laws of moral virtue. It is granted when the apoſtle ſays, "by the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified" that it is equally true in ſtrictneſs both of the laws of Moſes and the laws of Jeſus—but upon the temporaneous laws of the former only he had his eye. And when he is on the other hand ſhewing that the gentiles who had never practiſed the rites of Moſes, might yet be juſtified as

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well as the jews, he ſays, " We conclude that a man is juſtified by faith without the deeds of the law." The laws of Moſes are exempt in both caſes—it was juſt a matter of indifference, whether they were jews or gentiles, whether they practiced the law or not—they were all to be juſtified by faith, and not by the deeds of the law. In truth, I ſuppoſe faith alone is the condition of juſtification, as good works are of the rewards, but neither meritorious. The deeds of the law which St. Paul depreciates as of no value, not only in point of juſtification, but in every other ſenſe; and which he counts as droſs and dung, are evidently not that piety and moral virtue which he univerſally inculcates. And as it is impoſſible to aſcertain the genuineneſs of faith but by revelation, or ſubſequent obedience, and revelations have now ceaſed;——ſo in effect, towards the moral comfort, a conſcientious and virtuous life is to be attended to and treated very much as if it was the condition of pardon. And if any truſt to good works for juſtification, in the ſame manner as others truſt to faith for juſtification, as a condition only of receiving the atonement, it is not eſſentially erroneous, ſince in either caſe the truſt and dependance, with regard to the meritorious cauſe, is in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and this only. Did our truſting to good works or to faith alone lead off our ſupreme dependence from the ſacrifice and righteouſneſs of Chriſt—ſhould we in our dependence ſubſtitute either *faith* or *holineſs* in the ſtead of Chriſt's atonement; or in the ſame ſenſe truſt to the *merit of faith* or *holineſs* for *juſtification*, as we all agree to truſt to the merits of Chriſt; it would be as eſſential a departure from the chriſtian method of recovery, as to truſt to jewiſh ſacrifices, and the righteouſneſs which is of the law of Moſes. But there are no ſuch notions or ſentiments prevailing in this land. Indeed we are a little puzzled about the term and condition *in us* of our being intituled to the atonement; but we univerſally depend on the atonement as

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the meritorious foundation of our acceptance and juſtification. Thus we have conſidered the conſequences by the grace of God connected with faith in our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

The conſequences connected with the *principle of virtue*, begotten in *regeneration*, are firſt, the ſubſequent life of virtue, and ſecondly its rewards. This principle reſembles the moral perfection of the ſupreme intelligence, and is the baſis of univerſal virtue and univerſal happineſs throughout the moral world. All pure intelligences of every ſubordination partake of it in their meaſure, and are actuated by it. When prevalent in man, it as neceſſarily and naturally influences and impels to a life of holineſs, as a polluted principle when prevalent impels to a life of vice. It naturally tends to perpetuate itſelf; yet through the embarraſſments of a corrupted world, it would decline and come to nothing, if it was not upheld by its divine author. Whence the perſeverance of ſaints is not to be aſcribed to the indiſſoluble perpetuity of the principle of grace, but to the promiſe and continually ſuſtaining power of God. A courſe of holy obedience and heavenly conduct is pleaſureable and delightful, and evidential of the reality of grace in the heart, and the ſteadineſs of our faith:—this is the preſent benefit of good works:—but beſides this, their moſt eſſential connections are the *rewards*. The good the gracious principle is not in any meaſure to be rewarded, like the good works it produces. Hence the book of the revelation repreſents that at the final adjuſtment, men are to be rewarded, not according to their faith (this has quite a different connexion, viz. juſtification), not according to the principle of grace, but according to the good works which flow from it:—this not of merit, but of the free, rich and ſovereign grace of God. In God's adminiſtration, *grace* and *reward* are not inconſiſtent. The final rewards of virtue are as much of grace, as the beſtowment of juſtification on faith, or the giving both faith, repentance, and

regeneration,

regeneration. But though theſe rewards are of grace, yet God has been pleaſed to inform us that the rule he preſcribes to himſelf, is to apportion them to the degrees of ſanctity. Thus the whole of our ſalvation is grace—— *by grace are ye ſaved, through faith, that not of yourſelves, it is the gift of God.* Hence,

7. We agree in inculcating and recommending a life of practical religion, a life of purity, holineſs and moral virtue. We earneſtly recommend private & public devotion, family religion, and pious education of children—that the light of our good examples may ſhine around us, and excite others to glorify our heavenly father. We endeavour to cultivate a reverential and undiſſembled homage of the moſt high, together with unconfined, generous and diffuſive benevolence, which ſhall render this life ſocial and pleaſant, and qualify us for the future aſſociation with the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect. And to animate us to this, we fail not to paint the glories of paradiſe and the charms of virtue, and to exhibit ſuch ſublime and exalted views of the moral government of God, as may charm and allure us to that conduct which is the ſupreme honor of our natures.

8. We further agree, that however impotent and helpleſs we are of ourſelves, yet if any ſinner, even in an unregenerate ſtate, will uſe the appointed means of recovery, he may be encouraged to hope for that further aid and ſucceſs which will terminate in his final ſalvation. Not that the ſinner can regenerate himſelf:—but inſtead of ſitting down in ſloth, as if he had nothing to do, no encouragement to labor for the meat that endureth to everlaſting life, he ought to be up and doing, and work out his ſalvation with fear and trembling, knowing, that on his faithful improvement of the talents and advantages he enjoys, it is God that worketh in him both *to will and to do* of his own good pleaſure. He ſhould uſe the appointed means of religious contemplation on his ſtate, and duly attend to the eternal conſequences of moral action, whether virtuous

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or vicious : like a rational and immortal being, he ſhould deliberate on the tendency, event and iſſue of his behaviour. He ſhould conſider that, by his almighty lawgiver and judge, he is placed on this theatre of action to ſuſtain in the view of mortal and immortal beings a certain character, and that the part he acts has final connexions of the moſt important moment. He ſhould read the ſcriptures to learn the way of life, the terms of acceptance. He ſhould not neglect the duty of attending and hearing the word, and above all of humble prayer and ſupplication to the father of lights, for the illuminations of his holy ſpirit, to enlighten his mind, that he may clearly diſcern thoſe rich and attracting diſcoveries of redeeming love, which may beget faith and renovation of ſoul. He ſhould labor for ſuch juſt and affecting views of the folly of vice, and the excellency and wiſdom of virtue, as may terminate in abhorrence of the one, and a complacency in the other. From the juſt humility and ſelf-abaſement which attends a thorough conviction of ſin, there will be an eaſy and irreſiſtable tranſition to that joyful and unreſerved ſurrendery of the ſoul to God, which on our part completes the title to bleſſedneſs.

Let no one then be diſcouraged and ſay, that he cannot pray to God acceptably, or aſk in ſincerity. For though the pure and ſublime ſincerity exerciſed by a ſoul under the full raviſhing diſcoveries of the goſpel, cannot be expected in the unregenerate; yet if ever their prayers are anſwered, their imperfect ſincerity is accepted: and it is evident that they are, becauſe with the laſt humble aſpiration of the ſoul antecedent to converſion, is connected the imparting regenerating grace. In a word, God would not call upon us indiſcriminately to aſk mercy of him, if he did not indiſcriminately grant it. The connexion between our petitions and the imparting of grace to the unregenerate, no more interferes with the ſovereignty of God, than the connexions of bleſſing with the peti-

tions of the godly. All that man receives is free, unmerited grace. And if the *promiſes* are a peculiar favor reſerved for the ſaints; there are *encouragements* however to the unregenerate, to turn from their evil ways and ſeek God, who giveth grace to the humble. Jeſus Chriſt came to *call ſinners* to repentance; and with the gracious invitations he makes to them, he ſays, *aſk and ye ſhall receive*— and again, *whoſoever will let him come*:— the ſealing the viſion and the prophecy was with an univerſal invitation to all freely to come and be happy in paradiſe, in that pathetic, earneſt and affectionate addreſs to mortals, "I Jeſus have ſent mine angel to teſtify unto you theſe "things—and the ſpirit and the bride ſay, COME. And "let him that heareth ſay, COME. And let him that is "athirſt, COME. And *whoſoever will* let him take the "water of life *freely*." Come all mankind, whoſoever will let him come. Theſe invitations are not to the virtuous only, but to a whole wicked debauched world, whoſoever will let him come to Jeſus and be happy: let him come and make a humble ſurrendery of himſelf to him whoſe right it is to reign, whoſe is the ſovereignty and juſt dominion of man, and he ſhall be accepted. Theſe invitations are conceived in language as ſtrong as the promiſes. However at leaſt there are encouragements to ſinners—and the encouragements of a God are as infallible and equally to be depended upon as his promiſes.

The uſe of means is neceſſary in our beginning the religious life, for our confirmation in faith, and for the ſubſequent culture in virtue.

9. To cloſe our agreement in doctrinal principles we believe the *reſurrection* of the dead, the future *judgment*, and final retribution. The ſpirits of men "when ſepa-"rated from their bodies, will not drop into a ſtate of in-"activity, inſenſibility:—ſeparate ſouls will paſs into the "unſeen world of unbodied ſpirits, and be ſubject to the "laws and government, to the work and rewards of that world:

" world: they will during that ſtate of ſeparation be ei-
" ther united to the ſociety of angels, and happy ſouls,
" or be herded with the degraded angels, and unhappy
" ſpirits of dead men: they will during this ſtate of death,
" either tremble at the foreſight of their re-union to their
" antient bodies, or wait and long in this ſtate of expec-
" tancy for the redemption of their bodies.*" I muſt beg leave to procede a little further, and add,

10. That we agree in the two poſitive inſtitutions of *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's-Supper*. As to the communion, we do not proſtitute it to the vicious and debauched, but reſtrict it to perſons of ſobriety, faith and virtue: and for the poſture, according to the example of Chriſt and his apoſtles, we celebrate it *ſitting* around the Lord's table. We agree not only in the baptiſm of adult believers, but of their infant ſeed. However incapable they are of inſtruction and faith, yet Jeſus Chriſt in ſaying, *of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven*, as we take it, aſſerts that they are capable of enjoying the bleſſings of his ſpiritual kingdom—capable of admiſſion into it—and of conſequence capable of the initiatory ſeal by which all are to be received into his kingdom. They may be intituled to great bleſſings, tho' not by their own act, yet by the ſeal of initiation, by which they are embodied into that catholic community of the virtuous, which having the patronage of Jeſus will in the iſſue appear to be not only the moſt honorable incorporation in this part of the moral world, but to imply intereſts and connexions of great moment. As for the mode of baptiſm we univerſally perform it by *affuſion* or ſprinkling—but whether it be done thus, or by *immerſion*, we do not hold it eſſential. And as the chief difference between the *Baptiſts* and us is reſpecting the ſubjects, viz. Infants, on which good and ſenſible learned men have judged variouſly; ſo there begins to be a good harmony and friendly correſpondence between the catholic and charitable of both denominations, which I hope will continue and in-

* Pemberton's Elect. Serm.

creaſe; and this benevolence is intirely conſiſtent with our adhering to our reſpective denominations.

11. We agree in the belief of the inſpiration of the ſcriptures—we believe that they contain an authentic and the only infallible account of the whole ſyſtem of revelation made from Time to Time to mankind—and that they are a *ſufficient* rule of faith and practice. Our churches, God be thanked, are not yet deeply tinged with deiſm—may God preſerve them pure! And as they yet retain the popular belief of revelation, which will abide the moſt ſevere ſcrutiny, ſo they accept the ſcriptures as an infallible rule. It is indeed a little unhappy, that, like others in the chriſtian world, ſome of us are fond of ſubſtituting human interpretations given by authority of councils and learned men, exacting that the ſacred ſcriptures be underſtood according to ſenſes fitted and defined in human teſts, which all acknowledge to be fallible. But it is to be hoped that we ſhall ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith the goſpel has made us free. There ought to be no reſtrictions on the conſcience of an honeſt and ſober believer of revelation. The right of conſcience and private judgment is unalienable; and it is truly the intereſt of all mankind to unite themſelves into one body, for the liberty, free exerciſe and unmoleſted enjoyment of this right, eſpecially in religion. Not all the difference of ſentiment, not all the erroneous opinions that have yet been ſtarted, afford juſt umbrage for its extinction, abridgement or embarraſſment. Have the proteſtant formularies ſubſerved the defence of the truth as it is in Jeſus?—Rather have they not in event proved new ſources of religious diſpute and undeterminable controverſy? The churches of *Geneva* have long ſince had the wiſdom to drop their article of *conſenſus*, as the great diſturbance of the chriſtian harmony. And the clergy have found themſelves obliged to interpret the *Helvætic*, and all other proteſtant confeſſions, in the ſcripture ſenſe, with a *divinis veritatibus in hoc libro contentis ſubſcribo*:

ſubſcribo.—I am ſatisfied we ſhall err leſs if we make the ſcriptures the only rule of faith, than if we depart from this, and ſubſtitute another; or as many do, who ſay they believe the ſcriptures the *only* rule, and yet in all their judgments on ſcripture, meaſure that *only* rule by *another* rule. Nor do ſubſtituted rules anſwer the purpoſe of detecting heretics at all better than the primary rule, ſince on experience it is found none more freely ſubſcribe and ſware to human teſts than deiſts, ſceptics and the moſt debauched. If God's incloſure will not keep out the erroneous, can it be expected that ours will? The univerſal pretext is a preſervation againſt hereſy. But it is to be remarked, that human teſts make more heritics than the word of God—all that the one determines to be hereſy, is not hereſy by the ſcriptures. A man may be a very great heretic according to the one, and an excellent chriſtian according to the other at the ſame time. St. *Paul* was one of the greateſt heretics, and even gloried in his hereſy, and yet was one of the beſt of chriſtians. The *Waldenſes* were heretics. The *proteſtants* are all heretics with the *romaniſts*, according to the council of *Trent*. All that can be advanced for public human teſts among proteſtants, can and has been advanced with equal force for thoſe of the romaniſts: for it is not ſo much the real truth or error contained in theſe teſts and formularies that is conteſted, as the authority by which they are impoſed, which is only human, and therefore not obligatory on conſcience. Though we have reaſon to be thankful that all the proteſtant formularies* are ſo agreeable to ſcripture as they are; yet they give deciſions on ſome things which the ſcripture has not determined, and on which not only the heterodox, but the moſt orthodox and learned divines have different ſentiments—and in other things they are too imperfect to be adopted by chriſtians as a ſtandard and criterion of chriſtian truth: and

* Harmonia Confeſſionum.

and ever have been looked upon among the ſenſible part of mankind, as having no more weight and authority in forming our religious opinion, our judgment on true religion, than any other human compoſition, as ſermons, bodies of divinity, treatiſes on the great doctrines of chriſtianity—and as having no more claim than theſe to infallibility. God be thanked we are not embarraſſed with ſubſcriptions and oaths to uninſpired rules for defining truth, in this land of liberty, where the SCRIPTURES are profeſſedly our ONLY RULE.

12. Again, We agree in the ſufficiency and validity of preſbyterian ordination. This was the ordination practiſed by the apoſtles, and among the primitive chriſtians of the firſt and ſecond centuries.—This is agreeable to ſcripture :—was introduced into our churches at the beginning ;—and this has continued our practice ever ſince. The *apoſtolic* order was appointed in virtue of a ſupernatural commiſſion and diſpenſation, which ceaſed at the death of St. John. During theſe ſupernatural communications of the holy Ghoſt, many were divinely, I mean ſupernaturally, called to the work of the miniſtry, beſides the apoſtles ; and were to this end endowed with the gift of tongues and other miraculous powers. As the converts multiplied and formed into religious aſſemblies or meetings, the holy Ghoſt appointed overſeers and paſtors to inſtruct and feed the flock of God, to perform baptiſms and adminiſter the communion. And theſe were indifferently called preſbyters or elders, teachers, biſhops, paſtors. The elders of Epheſus are ſtiled biſhops, Acts 20. 28. So the elders of Philippi are called biſhops, Philip. 1. 1. The elders are to take the overſight of the flock, *epiſcopountes*, doing the work of a biſhop. It cannot be ſuppoſed, that the city and church of Epheſus within the firſt three years had ſundry dioceſan biſhops ; and yet the apoſtle calls the elders of that church biſhops. Theſe things convince us that ſcripture biſhops, and elders or paſtors, are of the ſame order

order and office. Dr. Hammond ſays, " there were no " presbyters of an inferior order inſtituted by the apoſtles." And the learned Dr. Stillingfleet made this noble conceſſion " that there were no biſhops during the apoſtles " life" meaning no dioceſan biſhops in the ſenſe of the latin church. We are confirmed in this from conſidering what this office was in the ſynagogue, from whence it was adopted into the church. The head or preſident of the ſynagogues ſuperintended the public reading and explications of the law and the prophets, and performed the public offices of devotion and preaching *. This officer in the hebrew ſynagogues was called *Chazzan*; and in the helleniſtic ſynagogues *Epiſcopos*, a *biſhop*; and ſometimes *Sheliach Tſibbor, angel of the church*, who never had the charge of more than one congregation, ſo that there was as many biſhops as ſynagogues. In the firſt forming of a ſynagogue, the Chazzan was elected by the members, and ordained by the impoſition of hands of the elders of the ſynagogue. Afterwards the ſucceſſion obtained in the appointment of the Chuzan who ordained his ſucceſſor by impoſition of hands, an antient rite of conſecration to a religious office. It does not appear that the Chuzan was ever appointed by the Sanhedrin. Nor does it appear that the ſynagogues or their officers were of divine appointment: ſince the oracular reſponſes of Urim and Thummim, and the other ſupernatural communications ceaſed before their inſtitution. The ceremonies of *anointing* and *impoſition of hands* originally implied an authorative deſignation from heaven. The tribe of *Levi* was conſecrated to the levitical office, and the family of *Aaron* to the prieſtly office by *impoſition of hands*, implying an authoratitive deſignation from heaven. *Saul* and *David* were deſignated to the regal office by the ceremony of *anointing with Oyl*. *Barnabas* and *Paul* were ſeparated to the apoſtolic office by *prayer and the impoſition of hands*. There

* Lewis Antiq. Hæb. V. 2. p. 428 and Baſnage.

These were supernatural designations, and clothed the respective officers with a proper divine authority. And these rites of initiation into the real and pastoral office were retained, and probably were set forth as examples, and intended by God to be retained in the kingdoms and churches of succeeding ages, when the authorative designation was left to men. The apostles took early care to furnish examples for perpetual imitation in the churches, by leaving the designation of the pastors to the free election of the churches—using the same rites in setting apart those appointed by the churches, as in consecrating those that were supernaturally called and appointed by heaven. There is a great difference between imitating the antient divine appointments, and acting under a direct divine appointment. Samuel and the prophets anointed kings jure divino: but we do not now imagine that when a bishop anoints a king in these ages, that he does it jure divino, or confers any divine authority on the regal character. It is but *imitative* of the few instances of extraordinary regal appointment in the jewish monarchy. So the imposition of hands in the ordination of pastors, which is held *indifferent* in several reformed churches, implies no supernatural appointment to the pastoral office; and is in like manner *imitative* only of the antient ceremonies of consecration, and the few instances of extraordinary appointment in the apostolic age, and at the first setting up of christianity. The period of extraordinary appointment to the regal office was at most from Samuel to the dissolution of the hebrew monarchies in their respective captivities. The period for like appointment of the pastors is limited to the few instances of the first century, or at most to the period of miraculous powers. Since these periods both have been *imitative only.*

The ceremony of pastoral investiture was from the beginning performed by co-ordinate presbyters or pastors; with whom the apostles left the conferring holy orders in all

all the ſucceeding ages of the church. This pure and uncorrupted antiquity is on the ſide of ordination by co-equal presbyters. *Clemens Romanus* and *Polycarp* ſpeak of biſhops and elders as of the ſame order and office. *Jerome* and *Hilary* are on our ſide, by the conſent of all who are acquainted with eccleſiaſtical antiquity. And in the church of *Alexandria*, presbyterian ordination *only* was practiced for two hundred years.

Indeed, in juſtice and candor to our proteſtant epiſcopal brethren, it muſt be acknowledged that the diſtinction between *biſhops* and *presbyters*, both as to order and powers, began early in ſome parts of the chriſtian church. And the antiquity and figure of dioceſan epiſcopacy, which obtained for ages throughout the chriſtian church, would have been an argument invincible, were it not for the total ſilence of SCRIPTURE, and the certainty that the ſcripture ordinations were performed by presbyters, and its making no difference between the offices and powers of biſhops and elders.* St. Paul refers Timothy to the gift he had received *by the laying on the hands of the presbytery* or elders, not to the power received from himſelf as an apoſtle aſſiſting in ordination as a ſuperior officer. The elders who laboured in word and doctrine, aſſiſted in the ordination of paſtors in other churches beſides their own. The apoſtles, and Timothy and Titus, in ordaining elders in every city, acted as elders only, not in virture of the ſupernatural communication of miraculous gifts—tho' theſe were frequently imparted in the presbyterian ordinations of the apoſtolic age:—This however did not conſtitute any part of that paſtoral character which was to be of ſtanding perpetuity in the church. The manner of the apoſtles and primitive presbyters was this; when in their travels, or the vicinity of their ſtated labors, there appeared a body of chriſtians proſelyted by themſelves or the antient evangeliſts, ſome of the brotherhood were

 choſen

* Bp. Downam on the Miniſtry, p. 8.

choſen to the paſtoral office and overſight or epiſcopacy of the congregation—theſe the apoſtles or any other presbyters conſecrated in presbyterian ordinations as *fellow labourers*. Thus Titus was left to travel *Crete*, and as a presbyter himſelf to ordain presbyterian biſhops, i e. paſtors in every city. Thus the original epiſcopacy was the paſtorate of a ſingle congregation. The hierarchy of the greek and latin churches after the apoſtolic age reſolved the body of eccleſiaſtics into ſubordinations unknown to the apoſtles, who left but one order of inſtructors, that of elders, with power to perpetuate themſelves in the election of the people to the ſecond coming of Chriſt.

At the reformation it was ſo generally conceded that presbyterian ordination was the original practice, that it had univerſally obtained but for the *dignities* and *revenues*. As much as this, on the part of England, is implied in the reaſonings of Dr. MADDOX the late bp. of Worceſter:—upon whoſe reaſonings a parliamentary eſtabliſhment of *presbytery*, in the reign of Q. Elizabeth, had been as conſonant to *ſcripture* and *primitive* antiquity, as that of *prelacy*, had it been as agreeable to three-fourths of the body of the clergy as it was to one fourth.

" The judgment of the foreign churches of the re-
" formed is evident from the harmony of their confeſſions,
" which aſſert an equality in all goſpel miniſters. The
" ſenſe of the proteſtant churches of the *german empire*
" may be well known from thoſe articles called the
" *Smalcaldic* *; in which the equality of ordaining pow-
" er by divine right is aſſerted to belong to presbyters;
" which was ſubſcribed by *three electors, forty-five noble-
" men, the conſuls and ſenators of thirty-five cities, and a
" vaſt number of divines.* At home in our nation the
" reformers aſſerted the ſame equality of power by divine
" right. We have Dr. *Cranmer's* judgment for it by Dr.
" *Stillingfleet*: and in the book called the *erudition of*

" *the*

* Sleiden.

" *the chriſtian man*, which was drawn up by the body of " the clergy, *approved by both houſes of parliament*, and " publiſhed by the King's command, it is aſſerted that " *prieſts* and *biſhops* by *God's law* are one and the ſame, " and that the *power of ordinationbelongs equally to both.*†"

And as to the preſent practice of the proteſtant world ‖; the Lutheran ſuperintendents are confeſſedly but *primi inter pares*, and conſequently their ordination is truly preſbyterian. Lutheraniſm is the eſtabliſhment of the two ſovereignties of *Sweden* and *Denmark*, which include the kingdom of *Norway*. Two of the three religions, or rather forms of religion eſtabliſhed in the german empire at the treaty of Weſtphalia, A. D. 1648, were *Lutheraniſm* and *Calviniſm*. The *ſuperintendents* were ordained by *presbyters* only. *Luther* and *Melancton*, who were only presbyters, ordained ſeveral. And in *Denmark*, *Burgenhagius*, who was the great inſtrument of the reformation in that kingdom, ordained *ſeven* biſhops or ſuperintendents at one time; and yet he was only a presbyter. *Calvin* headed the reformation in France; but being obliged to flee perſecution, he repaired to Geneva, and aſſiſted in compleating the work begun by *Zuinglius*, among the halvætic churches. The churches of *France*, *Geneva*, and the *Swiſs* cantons all agreed in doctrine and the abolition of prelacy and eccleſiaſtical ſubordation—and from the commencement of the reformation practiced ordination by presbyters. The *Dutch* and *Walloon reformed* of the united provinces, which in the year 1560 amounted to 2190 churches, all agree in presbyterian ordination; ſo do the 450 churches of the canton of *Berne*, as well as the reſt of the *Swiſs* proteſtants: and ſo do the 938 churches of *Scotland*. Our congregational brethren the diſſenters in *England*, which at the revolution are ſaid to have compoſed a body of about 2000 churches; —Theſe I ſay, and the large body of our brethren the

 presbyterian

† Pemberton. ‖ Diſſent. Gent. Anſ. 84.

presbyterian and congregational diſſenters in the north of Ireland—all agree in presbyterian ordination:—add to these our proteſtant brethren the *Baptiſts*, in *Britain* and the *United Provinces* eſpecially, with whom we have the happineſs of agreeing as to ordination by presbyters or *elders*. I have not collected the numbers of the proteſtant churches in the world which practiſe ordination by preſbyters--tho' it is certain they far excede in numbers that reſpectable body in our own nation which retain and practiſe epiſcopal as diſtinguiſhed from presbyterian ordination. Nay, excluſive of the Lutherans who ſeem to retain a ſpecies of epiſcopacy, the reformed presbyterian churches comprehend double the number of ſouls to thoſe of the britiſh epiſcopacy. Tho' ſtrictly ſpeaking, the whole proteſtant world, except the church of England, agree in the validity of presbyterian ordination. If therefore the matter was to be decided by numbers, it muſt reſolve in our favor by a very ample majority—tho' truly not numbers, but the *ſcriptures alone* ought to decide the truth. It however muſt be confeſſed no ſmall ſatisfaction to find the largeſt body of proteſtants on our ſide, in imitating the apoſtolic practice in this as well as ſome other things, of which we are ſometimes upbraided—as particularly to mention but one more here, the omiſſion of Liturgies and rendering our addreſſes to God in that moſt natural as well as chriſtian and apoſtolic manner of *free prayer* and extemporaneous devotion. In theſe diſquiſitions we initiate our poſterity the riſing generation, not with a view of interfering with any proteſtant ſect, but upon the principles of conſcience and ſelf-defence. We deſire to live in peace and harmony with all—nor do we attempt to proſelite from any communion. We deſire only equal proteſtant liberty. And even our epiſcopal brethren muſt confeſs that we treat them with much greater lenity, charity, and chriſtian benevolence, than they treat our congregational brethren in England. And in general the declamations

declamations on the ſuperior excellency and purity of the church eſtabliſhed in ſouth Britain, neceſſiſtate us to adduce the equal excellency and purity of that eſtabliſhed for north Britain, with which we have the happineſs ſo nearly to agree. And as the parliamentary eſtabliſhments of neither of theſe extend to the britiſh American provinces, ſo every ſect have a right here to vindicate their peculiar forms. And tho' we judge that the *congregational* is equal at leaſt in excellency and *purity* to the *epiſcopal*, *presbyterian*, *claſſical* or any other forms, with all which we agree in eſſentials, yet we exerciſe this judgment and our defences upon it, with the moſt generous and perfect benevolence to all our proteſtant brethren, eſpecially thoſe who are evidently ſincere and conſcientious; knowing that they may be equally honeſt, and have equally the right of private judgment with ourſelves.

13. We agree that every voluntary chriſtian aſſembly have an inherent right, a power which ought neither to be *ſurrendered* nor *controlled*, of *electing* its own officers, ſuch as *paſtors*, or elders, and *deacons*. Happily different from moſt of the reformed churches, we are poſſeſſed of this moſt valuable privilege, which tho' they aſſerted, they could not retain.* Miniſters are not impoſed upon our churches. It had been happy for all the chriſtian world, had the filling up of paſtoral vacancies remained, as the apoſtles ſettled it, and as our fathers wiſely ſettled it for us, in the uncontrollable election of the church and congregation. Our fathers would not ſuffer a ſiſter church, or body of ſiſter churches, to lord it over one another, or hold a negative on one another's elections and paſtoral inveſtitures. In this they agreed with apoſtolic, uncorrupted antiquity. The firſt vacancy in the apoſtleſhip was filled up by the election of the 120 brethren—*they*, the brethren, *appointed two*; and *they*, the brethren, *gave forth* the heavenly directed *lots*. So the choice of deacons, as well as

* Harmonia Confeſſionum paſſim.

as paſtors, was in fraternal election: The twelve called the multitude unto them and ſaid, *brethren look you out* ſeven men, whom *we* may appoint or ordain—and the ſaying pleaſed the *whole multitude*, and *they choſe* Stephen *. And in ordaining elders or ſtated paſtors in every city, the univerſal cuſtom was to conſecrate thoſe whom the brethren firſt elected. Nor do we ever find the apoſtles or neighbouring paſtors ever negatived a popular election; but univerſally ordained ſuch men to the miniſtry as by the choice of the congregation appeared to be men of *good report*. So the churches of New-England chuſe their own paſtors, who are ordained or conſecrated, as *Euſebius* expreſſes it, "with the common conſent of the biſhops of the vicinity." And it is greatly to be deſired that all newly introduced miniſters be agreable to the paſtors of the vicinity, as a mutual harmony among *fellow-labourers* muſt greatly ſubſerve the common cauſe.

When it is ſaid, Acts xiv. 23, *they ordained them elders in every church*, it is evident from the known cuſtom of the *Keirotonia*, in the athenian democracy, that it ought to be rendered to this effect, *leading the people to the choice of elders in every church, by the lifting up of hands*. The apoſtles, in the opinion of Dr. Cotton Mather, only preſided, and the people under their inſpection elected. This *Keirotonia* is the practice of our churches. The ceremony of conſecration was the impoſition of hands with prayer. This ſimple proceſs compleated the paſtoral inveſtiture, and made a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt.

The original cuſtom ſettled by the apoſtles, was not worn out in ſeveral centuries: Ignatius writing to the church in Philadelphia, tells them, that it belonged to them to chuſe their paſtor. All antiquity confeſſes the part which the people had in the election of their paſtors. The council of *Calcedon*, ſpeaking of the church of *Epheſus*, ſaid, *that ſuch a biſhop ſhould be given them as ſhould be*

* Acts vi. 2.

*be elected by thoſe whom he was to feed.** *Conſtantine* wrote to the people of *Nicomedia*, that it was *in their power to make choice of what paſtor they pleaſed.* It is a celebrated ſaying of *Cyprian*, in explaining Acts i. 26. to confirm the power of the people in chuſing and refuſing their officers, "*Plebs chriſtiana maxime proteſtatem habet vel dignos ſacerdotes elegendi, vel indignos recuſandi*"——*the higheſt power of electing worthy paſtors, and rejecting the unworthy, is in the people.* A council in the VIIth century makes the ordination of a biſhop to be void, when he is not elected by the people. Even in *Rome* itſelf, the people elected their biſhop 'till the XIIth century. And popular elections of miniſters continued 'till *Charlemagne*. Before this time indeed the privilege was in a great meaſure deforced from ſome churches. For after the miraculous powers, the clergy encroached on this principle, eſpecially as the benefices became oppulent. But they did not complete the acquiſition, 'till that immenſe wealth, which they intrigued into their hands in the eccleſiaſtical revenues, gave them a weight which could no longer be reſiſted. This ſacerdotal aſcendency, and irreſiſtible influence, commenced from ſmall beginnings and gentle encroachments. From ſuch ſmall beginnings, as recommending the advice of neighbouring paſtors in the choice of a miniſter; they proceeded, as this cuſtom obtained, to *claim* and *demand* ſuch application for advice, as a paſtoral right; and from claiming it as a right, advanced to hold a negative on the elections of neighbouring churches; and afterwards in the light of councils, which have proved the grand ſources of corruption and tyranny, they beheld it for the public good and conſervation of the faith, that they ſhould be veſted with the ſole diſpoſal of paſtoral vacancies. In the ſubſequent ages of the church, thoſe who founded the revenues, whether ſtates or private perſons, aſſumed a temporary right of nomination or preſentation to benefices. But the clergy

* Dupin's ecc. his. and Ratio diſciplinæ Nov' Angl. p. 27.

clergy piouſly prevailed on the founders to deſignate this power to them in their laſt wills. Thus and by mortmains which they devoutly procured in bequeſts and pious uſes, ſubjected to the direction and diſpoſal of the religious, they had intrigued *two thirds* of the property of ſouthern and weſternEurope into their holy hands. Thus by the XIVth century the european churches not only loſt the liberty of paſtoral elections, but with it ſtupidly played away their property, and ſubjugated themſelves, their ſouls, bodies, and eſtates, to a plauſibly uſurped, becauſe ſpiritual dominion. Thus the churches at length loſt the invaluable power of paſtoral election, which they have never been able to recover. This ſhews how dangerous a thing it is to ſurrender liberty! In the reformation, the clergy themſelves loſt that power which they had piouſly intrigued from the people in the four preceeding centuries. For upon ſecularizing the eccleſiaſtical revenues, the proteſtant princes, nobility and oppulent founders, making appropriations for the ſupport of the clergy, deemed it wiſdom to aſſume the preſentations into ſecular hands. And the nomination is now moſt generally in patronages in all the proteſtant churches. Thus the power which the clergy in a long ſtruggle caught from the people, is at length lodged not in the people, not in the clergy, but in ſecular patrons.

The brethren and congregation have *loſt their liberty*, when the appointment or nomination of a paſtor is reſted, 1. In the ſovereignty, whether it reſide in a prince or a ſtate. Thus the ſtates of *Holland*, and the kings of *Sardinia* and *Sweden* have the excluſive nomination to paſtoral vacancies. 2. When it is in a presbytery, conſiſtory or conſociation. This was originally the caſe with the *Lutheran* and *reformed* churches in general, and continues ſo with reſpect to ſome of the churches of *Scotland*. 3. When it is ſhared between the ſovereignty and conſiſtory of the clergy, as in the dutchy of *Wurtemberg*. In this dutchy are 450,000 inhabitants and 620 miniſters, incluſive of the dignified

dignified clergy. " According to the old laws of the " *Wurtemberg* dominions, the eccleſiaſtical employments " were intirely in the diſpoſal of the conſiſtory, but many " male-verſations having for ſeveral years been obſerved " to obtain under ſuch a power, the beſt living being be- " ſtowed on the members of the conſiſtorial council —— " the duke thought fit to curtail this privilege of the " conſiſtory, ſo that now his highneſs alone appoints the " ſuperintendants, prelates and abbots; for the inferior " parſonages, the conſiſtory recommends three perſons, of " whom the privy council nominates one.*" 4. When it is in patronages, whether the patrons be princes, nobility, biſhops and dignified clergy, pious benefactors, or provincial governors. One or other of theſe have the advowſon of by far the greater part of epiſcopal livings in the britiſh empire, and throughout the proteſtant world. The royal *conge de lire* ſo reſtricts the election of the britiſh biſhops, as that their appointment may be ſaid to be in the crown. The epiſcopal livings in the province of *Maryland* are in the gift of the proprietary governor, who has the appointment and induction of all the clergy of the province. I am told that the collation to all epiſcopal benefices in the plantations, excepting the miſſions, is in the King's governors. In *Denmark* the power excluſive is in the prince, nobility and other patrons. Patronages are alſo numerous in the church of Scotland. All theſe are total deprivations of choice in the people: in ſome inſtances they may perhaps be conſulted, but have no *determining voice*, and in point of power this is to have juſt nothing.

The powers of the brethren, on the caſe before us, are *abridged and embarraſſed*, and their liberty but partial. 1. When in virtue of a public compact eſtabliſhed among a body of churches, the churches of the vicinity have a negative on a paſtoral choice of a deſti-

* Keyſler's trav. Vol. 1. p. 103.

tute congregation. Or 2. When in virtue of ſuch agreement the miniſters of the vicinity are inveſted with ſuch a negative. So that there being two voices in the election—the vacant congregation have one, and the neighboring paſtors another. I do not know that this is the caſe in any part of the world. No one can diſpute but that an eccleſiaſtical community or combination of churches can form ſuch a reſolve and enforce it, tho' not in virtue of any divine power: yet the wiſdom of ſuch a meaſure may be queſtioned. 3. When the advowſon or choice is in a veſtry and church wardens, or committee choſen by the congregation—as in rectories. This is a low ſpecies of liberty, and a reſtriction that almoſt amounts to deprivation. But in truth the loweſt ſpecies of real genuine liberty is, when there is at leaſt a negative in the congregation, as well as in a patron or presbytery, or thoſe who ſhare part of the liberty. If there is a negative only in the latter, even the indulgence of choice in the church is no real true liberty. Again, 4. When among a body of *free* apoſtolic churches, a number of neighbouring churches take upon themſelves to be diſpleaſed with the acts and election of a ſiſter church, and excommunicate or refuſe chriſtian fellowſhip with that church—if this ſhould not in the event controle the election & introduce a negative on the church, yet it certainly has a tendency to it; and at leaſt ſhews, that that combination of churches are deſirous of ſpiritual dominion, and would if they had power introduce themſelves to ſuch a negative. All pretexts are foreign; the queſtion is ſolely upon the point of *power*—whether it is ſolely in the church? or whether it ſhall be ſhared with the churches of the vicinity? And ſuch a practice is defenſible only upon this principle, that it is beſt for the whole body of churches to have this mutual reciprocal controll upon one another. And this principal is a fundamental ſubverſion of congregationaliſm. For if the transferring the whole power of electing a paſtor to the

churches

churches of the vicinity, would be a total deprivation of power in the particular church; then the transferring half that power, would be a partial a ſemi-deprivation. And if upon ſuch a ſurrendery, in a vicinity of 20 conſociated churches, the conſent of 10 beſides the vacant church be neceſſary, that church retains but one tenth of her power, and has given up and loſt nine tenths. Thus the introducing the conſociation to a negative on paſtoral elections, is an *abridgment and embarraſſment*, nearly amounting to a total deprivation of power in particular churches and congregations: and is conſequently a fundamental ſubverſion of congregationaliſm, according to which every congregation is veſted not with partial but plenary deciſive power.

Churches can then alone be ſaid to be *perfectly free*, when each congregation has an *unlimited, abſolute* and *ſelf-determining* power in the choice of their officers:— ſuch as britiſh freemen enjoy and exerciſe uncontroulably in the choice of a repreſentative or member of aſſembly. When no pat on, no aſſociation, no conſociation nor neighbouring churches have any negative or controul on the paſtoral choice; when the election originates and ends with the church and congregation, acting as a ſovereignty in this as well as all other eccleſiaſtical matters. And when a body of churches, 500 for inſtance, ſubſiſt in harmony and benevolence without infringing this fundamental principle of *univerſal liberty*, that body may be ſaid to enjoy the moſt free conſtitution, the genuine apoſtolic police. It is further to be remarked, that the chriſtian congregations have ſenſe & ability enough to chuſe their own paſtors, eſpecially ſince the revival of learning among the laity and the vernacular tranſlations of the ſcriptures have rendered common chriſtians good judges of paſtoral qualifications; beſides that in *many* of our congregations are gentlemen of liberal education and learned acquiſitions, equal and even ſuperior to the generality of our clergy.

And the preſent pious and learned body of miniſters in this land, perhaps as well adapted to inculcate piety and virtue, and diffuſe the knowledge of the great ſcheme of divine revelation, as any body of paſtors in the proteſtant world, do honor to congregational elections: for it is queſtionable whether any body of proteſtants, eſpecially the common people for whom the clergy are of principal uſe, are ſo generally and thoroughly acquainted with their bibles, both the doctrinal and hiſtorical parts of ſcripture; they are faithfully and thoroughly inſtructed.

I ſhall cloſe this head with mentioning ſome of thoſe ſingular churches among the happy few in the chriſtian world, who have not had this ineſtimable privilege deforced from them, or if once deforced have yet reſumed and retained it in oppoſition to even the pious attempts on the public liberty. Baron *Polnitz* ſpeaking of the republic of *Venice*, whoſe churches are of the romiſh communion, ſays "the inhabitants of every pariſh, chooſe "their paſtors."* Dr. *Burnet* ſays of the *Griſons*, "in "every league they have a ſynod, and—the people "chooſe their miniſters:" and that "the ſynod was "bound to receive" them.† The three leagues conſiſt of 63 communities, the proteſtants are two thirds, the catholics one. And another author ſays of them, "as to "the eccleſiaſtical government, every proteſtant church "has right of eſtabliſhing its paſtors, and of depoſing "them too."§ Add to theſe the remonſtrants and other ſectaries in *Holland* not of the eſtabliſhment; our brethren the *Diſſenters* in England, and the *baptiſt* and *congregational* churches in America.

14. We agree that every individual church has the *ſole power of judging and determining its own controverſies.* Our churches to the purpoſes of diſcipline are ſo many diſtinct, eccleſiaſtical, ſovereignties, in point of power and controul, as independent of one another, as the united provinces

* Lett. 25. † Travels Lett. 2. § Syſt. Geog.

provinces of Holland to purpoſes of civil government. So the thirteen provinces on this continent ſubſiſt independent of one another as to juriſdiction and controul over one another—yet in harmony. And one church or congregation has no more power over another, than one province over another, and yet they may all ſubſiſt in union and love. Union and harmony don't neceſſarily imply ceſſions of power, or ſubjecting to mutual juriſdiction. And as the powers, liberties and juriſdiction of each province may be ſaved harmleſs in a general alliance or plan of confederacy, as in the united provinces or ſwiſs cantons; ſo the powers, liberties and juriſdictions of each congregational church may be ſaved harmleſs in a general union and confederacy of churches. And the ſame principles may take place in confederating a multitude of leſſer bodies, as in confederating larger bodies, ſuch as provinces, cantons, kingdoms. But to return,

Our churches acknowledge no juriſdiction of ſiſter churches over them; but hold themſelves both capable, and to have power to determine all matters of difference that ariſe in a particular church. For in truth, in religion we ought all to be free; and conſequently not the religious ſpeculative opinions of a chriſtian, one that honeſtly believes revelation, ought to be deemed the ſubject of eccleſiaſtical animadverſion in a church, and little elſe beſides his morals. And this every church is a complete judge of, and perhaps is ſeldom miſtaken. And if we go beyond this, neither ſingle churches, nor a body, nor œcumenical councils can determine: as is evident from an experiment thro' the long tract of time from the council of *Nice* to that of *Trent*. It muſt be confeſſed indeed, that our churches have ſometimes taken on them the deciſion of matters, which all the power and wiſdom on earth cannot determine till the ſecond coming of Chriſt. But whatever is within the capacity of mortals to determine, reſpecting the chriſtian diſcipline, the brethren are ſufficient judges of.

Or

Or if they may ſometimes be at a loſs, they have recourſe to the opinion and advice of ſuch council as they think fit to conſult, reſerving to themſelves a liberty to receive or refuſe ſuch advice when given. And with this aſſiſtance they can determine any thing and every thing that can be determined by mortals—whether they confine themſelves to what properly belongs to them; or whether they enlarge into things which God perhaps has not determined for us, and never intended mortals ſhould determine for one another. And with regard to theſe laſt, the church, with the aſſiſtance of council, can reſolve and decide juſt as wiſely as the wiſeſt body of men, and ſave to themſelves the power of deciding the leſſer and yet more momentous differences which are truly the ſubjects of their deciſion. Therefore though our churches, in forming their deciſions in matters of diſcipline, make application to a council of the paſtors and meſſengers of neighbouring churches; yet the congregational churches univerſally hold a negative on the reſult of that council—or rather the deciſion of ſuch council is of no force till received and ratified by the inviting church: nor does it render that church obnoxious to the vicinity, if ſhe recedes from the opinion of the council. So that congregational councils are *adviſory* only. And in this manner have ſubſerved valuable purpoſes, not ſo much by affording any new light, as by becoming peace-makers in their connexions, influence and perſuaſions. Thus our churches are abſolutely free with reſpect to all foreign juriſdiction.

There was indeed in the year 1705, an attempt or propoſal to ſubordinate the whole body of our churches to the juriſdiction of conſociation, with final appeal to a general provincial conſociation, in which all controverſies were to take an ultimate iſſue and deciſion. But theſe propoſals met with inſuperable oppoſition, from the ſpirit of liberty. Dr. Cotton Mather ſpeaking of them ſays, "there were ſome very conſiderable perſons among the *miniſters*, as well

as *brethren*, who tho't the *liberties* of *particular churches* to be in danger of being too much *limited* and *infringed* in them. And in deference to theſe good men, the propoſals were never proſecuted." * To theſe propoſals of erecting ſpiritual judicatories, the reverend and learned Mr. JOHN WISE of *Ipſwich* made a very ſpirited reply, in a ſatyr entitled " the churches quarrel eſpouſed," in which he ſhews that the veſting of conſociations with judiciary and deciſive powers, would in the iſſue be the abolition of congregationaliſm. And there is no reaſon to think this gentleman was an enemy to our churches.—It was early ſeen to be important, that our churches ſhould be *conſociated*; but whether for the purpoſes of *harmony* only, or *dominion*, was as early the queſtion. For it was ſeen that whatever power was ceded to the ſtanding council, juſt ſo much was taken away from particular churches; and this claſhed with the principle, that every church had power to decide its own controverſies. The conteſting this claim, and oppoſing the transferring of ſpiritual dominion from the church to a ſtanding council, is the true reaſon, as I apprehend, that all our congregational churches in Maſſachuſetts and New-Hampſhire, are not reſolved into conſociations; which tho' not *jure divino*, are however excellent things. But to ſhew that the congregational churches are under no foreign juriſdiction of other churches aſſembled in ſtanding or occaſional councils, we may recur to the anſwer given by our churches aſſembled in Synod, A. D. 1662, to the queſtion on the expediency and manner of conſociations, propoſed by the aſſembly of Maſſachuſetts—This Synod agreed that every church or particular congregation has † " full power and authority eccleſiaſtical within itſelf, regularly to adminiſter all the ordinances of Chriſt, and *is not under any other eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction whatſoever*." Subordinate to this fundamental principle is all to be interpreted in that anſwer relative the communion and conſociation of churches,

* Ratio diſciplin. p. 184. † Reſult of 3d Synod. p. 88.

churches. Thus we ſee our churches are hitherto free. And the uſe they make of councils, which they occaſionally invite, is *adviſory only*— "when they have done all, the churches are at liberty to judge how far their advice is to be followed."* Thus ſtrictly ſpeaking, congregational councils have no power at all: and upon this principle it is conceded that "eccleſiaſtical councils, undoubtedly, have at leaſt as large rights, and as extenſive authority, in churches that are united in conſociation, *as in thoſe that are not.*" And this I take to be the truth of the caſe, that the confederacy was not meant to veſt the *conſociated* councils with any new powers, or indeed with any power at all, but leave them as *congregational* councils *adviſory* only. As to what authority *any* councils have *jure divino*, or by *divine right*, I ſhall not enlarge upon in this age of liberty and light. Doubtleſs whatever power the councils have from this quarter, whether *conſociated*, *congregational* or *œcumenical*, is to have irreſiſtable dominion over all the churches.

15. Altho' our "churches be diſtinct, and therefore "may not be confounded one with another, and equal and "therefore have not dominion one over another,"† yet they hold a chriſtian fellowſhip and communion. Our paſtors exchange labors with one another, and on occaſion adminiſter both ſacraments in one another's congregations. Our churches admit to occaſional communion the members of other churches here; and alſo thoſe who have been ſober "communicants in *Scotland*, *Holland*, or any reforming "churches in *England* or *Ireland*, or elſewhere.§" The moſt of our miniſters are reſolved into friendly *aſſociations*, in which they aſſemble twice a year for fellowſhip and harmony, but not for tyranny and dominion. The paſtoral interviews at the annual *convention* at *Boſton*, and on the *public commencements* in our *colleges*, may ſubſerve the purpoſes of union and benevolence. Provincial conventions

* Ratio diſcpl. 173. † Platform c. 15. § Ratio. diſc. 136.

ons are excellent things, ſo long as they continue only *ſocial interviews*: but when they aſſume upon themſelves the lordly ſuperintendence of the churches, as they did in the IVth & Vth centuries, they degenerate into a ſpiritual dominion, unfriendly to *liberty* and *truth*.

" As communion among kingdoms and commonwealths " hindereth not the intireneſs of juriſdiction in each king- " dom and common-wealth, within itſelf, in its proper " concernments; ſo it is in the communion of churches. " Therefore church communion muſt be only in a way of " *brotherly aſſociation*—but not in way of ſubordination " or ſubjection of one church to the eccleſiaſtical govern- " ment, whether of another church, or of the elders of " other churches aſſembled in claſſes or ſynods."—Com- " munion of churches in the—way of ſubordination or " ſubjection to other churches or ſynods—the ſcripture " no where approveth. Not of one church to another; " for there is a parity among churches;—nor of one " church to a ſynod made up of the elders of ſundry " neighbour churches." *

The *equality* and *independence* of every congregational apoſtolic church, is in part the eſſential baſis of the general union and confederacy. The conſtitution of our churches, like thoſe in the apoſtolic age, are *independent*, *free* and *ſocial*: and our platforms were received by the body of the churches *only* as plans of union and mutual fellowſhip;—explicit agreements, in which, reſerving to themſelves individually their *independence*, *equality* and *unaccountableneſs* to one another, they united in general communion in ordinances, paſtoral labors, advice and council:—But quite on a different footing from the conſtitutions of the churches of Scotland or Holland, for both of which however they always have deſervedly entertained a very high eſteem. The juriſdictions of the *presbyteries* in the one, of the *claſſes* in the other, and of the provincial *ſynods* in

* *Davenport's* power of congregational churches in anſwer to *Paget*, p. 140.

both, even the compilers of our platforms had for ſome reaſons of experience a diſaffection to, and our churches much more. They were willing and deſirous to walk together as equal ſiſter churches, not in ſubordination and ſubjection, but in univerſal proteſtant liberty and communion.

Having thus exhibited a ſummary view of the doctrine and polity on which our churches have a very general agreement, I procede

II. To mention ſome things on which there is among us ſome real or ſuppoſed difference of opinion, and to ſhew that theſe differences need not obſtruct the general harmony recommended in the text: and that theſe real and ſuppoſitious differences may be leſſened by benevolent and honorable conceſſions.

1. One ſource of different ſentiment, were the unhappy exceſſes into which our churches have been tranſported in the late enthuſiaſm that prevailed ſince the year 1740. In the public miſtaken zeal, religion was made to conſiſt in extravagancies and indecencies, which were not according to the faith once delivered. Multitudes were ſeriouſly, ſoberly and ſolemnly out of their wits. The ſcriptures were in danger of being neglected for the indiſtinguiſhable impulſes of the ſpirit of God; ſober reaſon gave way to enthuſiaſm; the terrors of eternal damnation, inſtead of ſubſerving rational and ſober convictions, were improved to throw people into that confuſion, frenzy and diſtraction, which unfitted them for the genial illuminations of the holy ſpirit. Beſides this, the ſtanding miniſtry were aſperſed, and repreſented under abuſive ſuſpicions of being unconverted, legaliſts, arminians. And as they were thus publicly and indecently vilified, ſo it was taught as a duty to forſake their miniſtrations, and form into ſeparate aſſemblies. And as was natural to expect, our churches were hereby rent and torn and thrown into convulſions and confuſions, to the great diſhonor of the general cauſe. Much

of

of this indeed was piouſly meant, and honeſtly intended, and proceeded from a zeal for the cauſe of God. Thus there was no doubt an intermixture of good, and it is to be hoped many were ſavingly converted. Our churches have now in ſome meaſure cooled and recovered themſelves, tho' the ſpirit of enthuſiaſm is not altogether extinguiſhed as yet, but operates and influences under different pretexts, and in a different form. But it is to be remarked with gratitude to the over-ruling diſpoſer of events, that amidſt the religious convulſions which threatned the ſubverſion of congregationaliſm, an augmentation of above 150 new churches has taken place in that period, founded not on the ſeparations, but natural increaſe into new towns and pariſhes. Theſe differences into which good and pious men were involved, have indeed made ſo deep an impreſſion, as not to be eaſily effaced in the preſent generation, notwithſtanding it is ſo much our intereſt to unite in love and harmony; nor can we ſo eaſily, heartily and ſincerely unite as if nothing of this nature had happened to diſturb the common benevolence. But it is to be hoped that the ſpirit of alienation will more and more ſubſide, and not be tranſmitted to ſucceeding generations. On all ſides there have doubtleſs been errors and indiſcretions, let us put on condeſcention and charity; and nobly forgive one another.

2. Another ſource of differences is that of *calviniſm* and *arminianiſm*. Many great and pious men are alarmed at a ſuppoſed prevalence of arminian principles through the churches of New-England: and others ſuppoſe calviniſm greatly erroneous. Under theſe banners they reſpectively enliſt, combat, conquer, and are conquered. The pretext of theſe names ſerves to legitimate mutual aſperſions which neither party deſerve. To me it appears that theſe jealouſies are founded almoſt intirely on miſtake: nor am I aware of any very eſſential or general alteration of the public ſentiment on what we all agree to be the fundamental principles of revelation. From ſome conſiderable ac-

quaintance with the miniſters of New-England, I cannot perceive any very eſſential real difference in their opinions reſpecting the fundamental principles of religion. I may be miſtaken—but their different manner and phraſeology in explaining the ſame principles appears to me to be their chief difference. We are apt indeed to attribute to one another conſequences of our peculiar explanations which we by no means adopt. Thus thoſe who are called arminians ſay of thoſe called calviniſts, that their doctrine of *original ſin* makes God the author of moral evil—of *election* implies, that we are to ſit ſtill and do nothing towards our ſalvation—of *juſtification* by the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, that it precludes the neceſſity of *faith, regeneration, inherent righteouſneſs* and *good works*, and ſo far reſolves this great affair into a matter of ſtrict *juſtice*, as to preclude the rich free grace and ſovereign mercy of the father—of *irreſiſtible grace* as deſtructive of and inconſiſtent with the moral liberty and free agency of man.—And ſo on for the reſt of the controverted points. And yet none that I ever converſed with who are called calviniſts, by any means admit theſe conſequences from their principles. Again, thoſe reputed calviniſts ſay of thoſe reputed arminians, that their doctrine of *moral freedom* implies a natural power to become good and do all that heaven requires of man without the ſupernatural influence and power of the divine ſpirit imparted to the ſoul—that their interpretations of *original ſin* implies a denial of the univerſal depravity of human nature, univerſal impotency and debilitation of the moral powers, and perverſion of affection, with loſs of the image and communion of God—that with them *election* is founded on foreſeen *meritorious* conditions in man—that their idea of Chriſt's *atonement* is deſtructive of the true nature of ſatisfaction and atonement for ſin in the propitiation of the obedience and death of Jeſus—that they truſt to the *works of the law for juſtification*.—that they ſubſtitute our

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obedience inſtead of the obedience of Chriſt, for the baſis and meritorious foundation of juſtification—in a word, that their notions and ſentiments imply that man is not totally depraved, and tho' fallen, yet by Chriſt recovered to even a better ſtate at preſent than Adam in innocency was in; and that there is no need of atonement, renovation of nature, or of the ſpirit's operation. But all reputed arminians I have converſed with ſtrenuouſly deny theſe conſequences. And I find both reputed calviniſts and arminians, eſpecially of the clergy, agree in admitting the depravity of human nature in all its powers and affections—the abſolute inability to faith and holineſs, without the ſpecial influences, aſſiſtances and operations of the ſpirit on the human mind, over and above the elucidated and inſpired diſcoveries of revelation, I do not mean to reveal new truths, but to enable us to an efficacious apprehenſion and diſcernment of thoſe already revealed—that to his enlightning energies is to be attributed the principle of *regeneration*—that we are *juſtified* in the ſight of God, not for good works, but alone for the ſake of Chriſt and his atonement: tho' they may differ in defining the nature of atonement, yet all agree in making it the ſole foundation of juſtification—that the benefits of Chriſt's righteouſneſs are appropriated to believers by *faith*, as the condition of our receiving the atonement.

Some perhaps entertain ſentiments *really* different on theſe important ſubjects. Their conviction however is not to be laboured by the coertion of civil or eccleſiaſtical puniſhment, but by the gentle force of perſuaſion and truth—not by appeals to the tenets of parties and great men; not by an appeal to the poſitions of Arminius or Calvin; but by an appeal to the inſpired writings. And I am perſuaded if all would freely and candidly compare their ſentiments to this rule, they would be very ſoon found not very variant. They would find themſelves to agree in the peculiar doctrines of chriſtianity * "ſuch

* Cooper. "as

" as the apoſtacy of human nature, the guilt and condem-
" nation into which all men have fallen; the perſon and
" offices of the redeemer; our pardon and juſtification
" thro' his obedience and ſacrifice; the conditions of the
" covenant of grace; the nature and extent of that holi-
" neſs without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord; and
" the neceſſity of the influences of the holy ſpirit to form
" us to it."

On finding this great agreement, ſameneſs and real harmony of ſentiment, among gentlemen reputed eſſentially to differ, I have often wondered whence could ariſe ſuch different reputations. And without charging it to the account of art and policy to aſperſe one another's characters, I have been charitably obliged to conceive this ſuppoſititious difference very like to that which aroſe on the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace*, and produced a memorable convulſion in our churches in their infancy about 123 years ago: of which Dr. *Cotton Mather* has given us an account in his magnalia; where may be ſeen how the great Mr. COTTON was aſperſed and encompaſſed with the public jealouſy.* Jealouſies were raiſed between the beſt of divines and the beſt of chriſtians. It is remarkable how eſſentially they tho't themſelves to differ, and thought the difference even damnable too. Mutual eccleſiaſtical anathemas were denounced, civil diſcord enſued, till a diſhonorable perſecution ſatiated the public ſpirit, and prepared the churches for the cool retroſpect of 50 years, when they found the whole was ſurmiſe, ſuppoſition and miſtake. Dr. *Cotton Mather* freely declares it his opinion, that the miniſters of that day all very nearly agreed in ſentiment with Mr. *Cotton* at the ſame time, reſpecting thoſe very points on which they unhappily tho't themſelves to differ—and that their jealouſies all proceded from mutual concern for the welfare of the churches, which led them to ſuſpect and be alarmed at every thing that had the

* Mr. Cotton's Anſ. to Mr. Williams, p. 50.

the aſpect of tendency to their hurt. Poſterity may make the ſame judgment concerning us.

Theſe things are unaccountable in human nature—but have been facts in paſt ages—may be ſo in the preſent. The only way is to examine our ſentiments by ſcripture; then candidly and benevolently inquire how far we are agreed in reality; to walk together by the ſame amiable rule ſo far as we have attained to think alike; and to forbear real differences in love, where there appears a ſincere love of truth, candor and piety. Remembering we all have the unalienable right of private judgment in religion; and that liberty of thinking and chuſing our religion, *liberty of conſcience* was the great errand of our pious forefathers into America. And as to real differences, I believe we might amicably adjuſt them by honorable and benevolent conceſſions, by ſtudying and comparing the written word which we all agree to be a ſufficient rule, inſtead of human ſyſtems on which we all juſtly differ. In the ſearch after truth it ſhould be our perpetual motto, "*nullius addictus jurare in verba magiſtri.*" For after all, the queſtion ought not to be what is *calviniſm*, or what *arminianiſm?*—what was the opinion of *calvin*, or what the opinion of *arminius?* but what is real chriſtianity? what is the truth as Jeſus and his inſpired apoſtles delivered it?

3. There are ſome differences of opinion among us reſpecting the nature and authority of eccleſiaſtical councils, and the powers of particular churches. If I enter ſomewhat minutely into this ſubject, it may not only help us to diſcern the true ſource of theſe differences; but, which I principally aim at, may aſſiſt us in perceiving more accurately the nature and rationale of our eccleſiaſtical polity.

In the firſt ſettlement of this country our churches were free, independent and unſubordinate to one another. But though it was an agreed point that each church had of itſelf plenary power in deciding all its controverſies, and iſſuing

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all matters of diſcipline: yet they alſo agreed in conſulting and adviſing with the churches of the vicinity, repreſented and aſſembled in council on application of the conſulting church. The adviſory reſults of which councils had, as they juſtly ought to have, conſiderable weight in healing differences. In time it became the opinion of many of the clergy, that it was beſt for the conſervation of the faith and public order, that the adviſory influence of councils ſhould be extended into juridical authority. There have been formed two *platforms* for church diſcipline and polity:—one in 1647, before the notions of increaſing or indeed of giving any authority at all to councils began; the other not 'till 1708, when they run high. The firſt was made at a general ſynod aſſembled at Cambridge, conſiſting of the paſtors and meſſengers of ſeveral churches. The latter at a ſynod conſiſting of the paſtors and meſſengers aſſembled at *Saybrook*, previouſly elected and delegated from the four county conventions of the churches of Connecticut. After theſe platforms were made, they were tranſmitted to the churches for their approbation. Thoſe of Connecticut, except perhaps 14 or 15 churches, have acceded at length to the Say-brook agreement: in what ſenſe, with reſpect to the authority of councils, we ſhall afterwards inquire. The reſt of the congregational churches in New-England generally regulate themſelves on this point, according to the congregational platform, which is commonly called the congregational platform, or rather on the purely ſcriptural model. Now the difference of ſentiments reſpecting the authority of councils, is almoſt intirely founded on ſome very ſtrong expreſſions in both platforms, reſpecting the powers and independency of diſtinct unſubordinate churches; and other ſtrong expreſſions, eſpecially in the Say-brook platform, importing the ſubjugation of our churches to the final juriſdiction and authority of councils. It may facilitate our underſtanding this matter, as well as the eccleſiaſtical polity of our churches in general, to conſider

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the ſentiments of the compilers of theſe platforms, the public ſpirit of liberty at the times of their reſpective formation, and the ſenſe in which they were received by the ſmall body of churches at firſt, and laſtly the ſenſe in which they are received and adopted by the preſent large body of churches; moſt of which have been gathered ſince theſe regulations and agreements of our anceſtors. But before I proceed, let me juſt obſerve that our eccleſiaſtical polity, at leaſt ſo far as relates to councils, whatever it is, like the polities and ſocial confederacies of all other proteſtant churches, takes origin and is founded in *human* wiſdom, human agreement and confederacy, having no claim to *divine* authority. It is only a wiſe meaſure which the churches accede to for harmony, fellowſhip and union. Antecedent to which agreement and confederacy the churches were in full life, in full poſſeſſion of all eccleſiaſtical power: and if they have imparted or delegated all or part of this power to councils, the councils received juſt ſo much as the churches covenanted to impart and no more:—which the ſucceeding acts of the churches may reſume, limit or continue.

In order to enter into the ſpirit of the *congregational* platform which we are firſt to conſider, it may be obſerved what is well known, that the firſt miniſters and churches were partly *presbyterian*, partly *congregational*—both *independent*. There ſeem to have been three opinions among the miniſters. Three or four were for having the whole rule transferred and ceded from the fraternity to a ſtanding elderſhip; the authorative act and concurrence of the brethren to be taken in no caſes but the choice of elders, and in ratifying the ſentence of excommunication. But of this opinion the churches could never be perſuaded. Moſt of the miniſters were for an elderſhip elected by the fraternity, with a negative on the church; and ſo all church acts to procede on the concurrence of the elderſhip and brethren in a mixt adminiſtration. Some few

churches acceded to this: and this is the higheſt ſenſe in which presbyterianiſm ever obtained among our churches. Others of the paſtors agreed with the almoſt univerſal ſenſe of the brethren in the true and proper unmixt idea of a congregational church, viz. that all diſciplinary power veſted in the fraternity. All agreed in receiving the ſcriptures as their only rule in religion:—all very much agreed in their interpretation of the doctrinal parts of ſcripture:—differing in their notions of diſcipline in little more than this, viz. that *power of the keys*, which the *presbyterians* would have veſted in the elderſhip, the *congregationaliſts* would have to veſt and reſide in the body of the fraternity. Both agreed in the independency of each church. Nor were the presbyterians inclined to the mode of the Scottiſh or Holland claſſical presbytery. While they were for the excluſive power of elders in admiſſions to communion and diſciplinary acts, that is for the authority of presbytery in a particular church; they agreed in diſclaiming the authority of a presbytery out of the church, that is the juriſdiction of the eccleſiaſtical presbyteries of the vicinity. The congregationaliſts retained all the power in the hands of the brethren conjunctly. Both agreed that the power of the keys was in the church, whether exerciſed by the elders alone, or by the whole church. This is a fundamental principle from which the churches never ſuppoſed themſelves to have departed. On theſe general principles the plan of union or confederacy was conceived by the ſynod, A.D. 1646. aſſembled on the recommendation of the legiſlature of Maſſachuſetts. The ſynod thereupon appointed two gentlemen of the Maſſachuſetts, and one of the colony of Plymouth, to draught each of them a model of diſcipline and polity for the choice of the ſucceding ſeſſion. The compilers were the reverend meſſieurs *John Cotton* of Boſton, *Richard Mather* of Dorcheſter, and *Ralph Partridge* of Duxbury. Mr. *Mather*'s model is ſaid to have been choſen. Mr.

Norton

Norton reviſed it, and with ſuch further amendments as the ſynod thought proper, it was finiſhed. Now the ſentiments of theſe gentlemen are well known to have been presbyterian in the ſecond ſenſe above defined. I imagine they were nearly in the ſame ſentiments; unleſs perhaps Mr. *Cotton*'s notions of the authority and juriſdiction of councils might be lower than the others, as that pious and learned man had ſuſtained an implied or oblique animadverſion in the ſynod of 1637. So far as I can learn, their notions of eccleſiaſtical polity were thus, that every church ſhould be furniſhed with a presbytery conſiſting of a *paſtor, teacher* and one or more *ruling elders*, all elected by the church, in whoſe hands ſhould be the diſcipline and governing, as well as inſtruction of the congregation. That in matters of difficulty this presbytery might adviſe with a council conſiſting of ſuch a number of the triumvirate elderſhips in the vicinity or elſewhere, as they ſhould invite to aſſemble. That the churches properly congregational, and which had no triumvirate, ſhould inſtead of an elderſhip appear in council by their paſtors and meſſengers, as they had done in the ſynods of 1637 and 1646. That the paſtors, elders and meſſengers aſſemble in council in the capacity of delegates from the churches—and as *pares* or equals in council:—not that an occaſional council or œcumenical ſynod ſhould conſiſt of two eſtates, the clergy for one, and the lay-delegates for another; and ſo have diſtinct acts, as in the upper and lower houſes of convocation. That as an œcumenical council might aſſemble at the invitation of the legiſlature; ſo an occaſional council might be aſſembled on the invitation of the church when a difficulty ſubſiſted, not authoritatively to decide and determine the difficulty, but to adviſe the church how to decide and determine it. That they ſhould be aſſembled only on ſuch occaſions as the particular church thought proper, and conſider ſuch matters only as the church laid before them, & would be adviſed in.

That the aſſemblings of provincial ſynods and of ordinary councils, be neither of them ſtated, but both pro re natâ occaſional.

It is well known as I have ſaid, that however fond our fathers in the miniſtry were of the power of presbyteries in churches, and of the advice of councils, they were however very oppoſite to the powers of councils, claſſes or ſynods out of the church. In oppoſition to this extraneous foreign juriſdiction, many of them wrote largely, particularly the reverend Mr. *Cotton*: ſo alſo the rev. Mr. *Davenport* in his anſwer to the rev. Mr. *Paget* of *Holland*: ſo alſo the rev. Mr. Richard Mather, one of the compilers of the platform wrote againſt Mr. *Herle* in 1644, in confutation of Mr. *Herle*'s "four arguments for the "government of ſynods over particular congregations." Hence theſe gentlemen were intirely againſt the deciſive authority of councils and ſynods when aſſembled: or that they ſhould be veſted with power to enforce their decrees with a penalty of non-communion to be declared by themſelves authoritatively as a council or ſynod. They would have them *adviſory* only, to give their opinion and adviſe on difficult caſes, as readers of divinity in the univerſity, or men learned in the uſages and cuſtoms of the churches. They were to the churches, if I may borrow an illuſtration from high example, what the privy council are to the king. On the matters laid before them they draw up their judgment and reſult, which is remitted to the church, —if the church received it, it had force; not through the authority of the council or of the churches repreſented in council, but of the church which receives and confirms it, and which has a plenary power of governing itſelf, and deciding all its controverſies. In like manner the reſult of an œcumenical council or ſynod being remitted to the churches, by the reception of the voting receiving churches to have authority, and among theſe to have force over thoſe only that explicitly receive it. Nor was any church to be hereticated for not approving or receiving

receiving the reſult of a ſynod or council. On the ſingular caſe of cenſuring a church as a church (whether any thing of this nature be conſiſtent with the fundamental independency and unſubordinate equality of churches, or not) it was the opinion of the fathers that a ſynod as ſuch, much leſs an ordinary occaſional council conſiſting of a few churches, had no authority, and ought not to be veſted with any, to excommunicate that offending ſiſter church. But that the ſynod or œcumenical council conſiſting of a repreſentation of the whole body of the churches, recommending non-communion in their reſult, excommunication ſhould procede on the acts of particular churches, and be performed, not by the ſynod *jure ſynodali*, but by the churches themſelves to whom the excommunicatory reſult ſhould be remitted, or by ſo many as ſhould ſee cauſe for the reaſons aſſigned in the reſult to withdraw communion:—that no church or churches were obliged to vote this reſult on the penalty of non-communion*:—that ſo far as this ſentence of non-communion proceeded in the churches, the particular offending church ſhould be and remain excommunicate till it ſhould render ſubmiſſion to the acceptance of each church reverſing the ſentence:—that if the act of non-communion paſſed in all the churches, ſaid church was abſolutely and intirely excommunicate; if in 20 only, it was excommunicate with reſpect to thoſe 20 only and no more, and remained in order and regular ſtanding with thoſe churches from which it was not cut off by an expreſs act. Thus in the opinion of theſe gentlemen, the higheſt act of eccleſiaſtical cenſure, viz. excommunication, was to be guarded.

This I take to be a juſt ſummary of the opinion of the fathers on eccleſiaſtical polity in general, and the conſtitution of councils in particular—as may be collected from their writings, eſpecially Mr. *Cotton's* book *of the keys*, and Mr. *Norton's* anſwer in the name of all the New-England paſtors, to the queſtions on church polity ſent over by

* Non tamen ſub pœnâ cenſuræ eccleſiaſticæ. Norton ad Apollon. p. 110.

by ſome of the London miniſters from *Appollonius*, a dutch divine, in the name of the *Zeland* paſtors in 1644. This anſwer was wrote the year before the ſynod, which aſſembled firſt in 1646, again 1647, and laſtly in October 1648, when they preſented the platform to the legiſlature to be by them recommended to the churches. Mr. Cotton in his elegant preface to Mr. Norton's anſwer, comparing the eccleſiaſtical juriſdictions in the Holland and New-England churches, ſums up his opinion on this ſubject thus, "Synodos nos unà vobiſcum, cùm opus fuerit, "& ſuſcipimus & veneramur—actus regiminis quos vos à "ſynodis *peragi* velletis, eos à ſynodis *porrigi* eccleſiis et *ab* "*eccleſiis* ex ſynodali *diarthoſi peragi* peteremus.--Petimus "et illud etiam ut regimen omne eccleſiaſticum adminiſtra-"tur à presbyteris cujuſque eccleſiæ in eccleſiæ facie; nec "inſcia nec invita eccleſia. Vos aliud quiddam vendica-"tis."——"Annon ſatis tuto cautum fuerit nequid ec-"cleſia detrimenti capiat, ſi omnia a presbyteris eccleſiæ, "eccleſia conſcia & conſentiente peragantur, modo nihil "arduum—niſi ex conſilio vicinorum compresbyterorum "tranſigatur?" We may remark that "*ex ſynodis porrigi* "*eccleſiis, et ab eccleſiis peragi*" gives the intire idea of the power of councils and the power of churches: the councils are to *adviſe* what is to be done, the churches are to *do* what is to be done. Agreeable to this was the opinion of Mr. *Hooker*, Preſident *Chauncy*, Mr. *Davenport*, Preſident *Oakes*. Mr. *Hooker* who died 1647, while the platform was compoſing, ſpeaking of ſynods ſays, "they "have no power of inflicting cenſures or of impoſing "their concluſions and determinations upon others under "pain of cenſure." And again "they ſet down their "determinations—and ſo return them to the particular "churches whence they came, and their determinations "take place, not becauſe they concluded ſo, but becauſe "the churches approved of what they have determined."*

Preſident

* Survey, part. 4. p. 47.

Preſident *Oakes* was a great advocate for the ballancing power of elders in mixt congregationaliſm, and for " councils and ſynods, and the *deciſive power* thereof, *as* " *it hath been ſtated by the leaders* of the congregational " way both in Old and New-England." Though he had no notion that " the rule and authority of the elders " ſhould be rendered an inſignificant thing—as in the " way of the *Browniſts*"; yet he was as careful " that " the liberties of the people may not be overlaid and op- " preſſed, as in the *claſſical* way." " If presbyterianiſm " in the rigor of it ſhould obtain among us, there will " an oppreſſion of the liberties of the people." Comparing the forms of the ſeveral proteſtant churches, he ſays, " Great blindneſs had happened unto the world for " many ages—— &c. The *reformation* in K. *Edward*'s " days was then a bleſſed work; and the *reformation* " of *Geneva* and *Scotland* was a larger ſtep; and for " my part I fully believe that the *congregational way* " far excedes both, and for the ſubſtance of it is the very " way that was eſtabliſhed and practiſed in the primitive " times, according to the inſtitution of Jeſus Chriſt.— " And indeed it hath been my perſuaſion from what I " have read and obſerved, that thoſe that would forſake " the congregational, and paſs over to the presbyterian " way, becauſe of ſome differences of notion among our " *congregational divines*, or difficulties in the practice and " way of the congregational churches, ſhall find that they " make but a bad exchange; and that there are *as many* " *or more differences, difficulties and entanglements* in the " *presbyterian principles and practice.* And I muſt needs " ſay, that I ſhould look upon it as a great degeneracy if " we ſhould leave the good old way *ſo far* as to turn *coun-* " *cils* and *ſynods* into *claſſes* and *provincial aſſemblies*—. " And elders ſhould manage all themſelves in an *autocra-* " *tical abſolute way*, to the utter ſubverſion or overthrow " of the liberty and priviledge of the brethren." *; The

* Preſident OAKES' Election Sermon, A. D. 1673.

The ſpirit of liberty at this time in the *churches* was ſuch, that they were on the ſubject of *diſciplinary power* generally congregational, and in no wiſe fond of the lower reſtrictions of the elderſhips: and with reſpect to *admiſſions to communion*, they were ſo univerſally congregational, that I ſuppoſe there had not been an inſtance of church admiſſion *ſine fratrum ſuffragiis*, without the votes of the brethren. This part of presbyterianiſm, viz. the elders admitting to communion, without the explicit concurrence of the church, never obtained among the firſt churches. Several churches in compliance with the ſentiments of their paſtors, had the *ruling* and *teaching* elders at firſt, as well as the *paſtor*: yet they at length diſuſed the *ruling* elder; and the *teaching* elder as diſtinct from *paſtor* is now dropt. The authority of this triumvirate never roſe high; ſome few of our pious fathers early put in high claims for it, that it ſhould be veſted with ſupreme rule and ſole dominion. But the ſpirit of the churches would not bear this. The generality of the clergy, not merely from condeſcention, and being overpowered by the prevailing ſpirit of liberty, but I believe from honeſt perſuaſion that it was the ſcripture model, were for dividing all acts of rule and diſcipline between the *elderſhip* and *fraternity*, and rendering the concurrence of both neceſſary. And here the churches cloſed, only being at liberty to have, or not to have an elderſhip beſides the paſtor. Tho' the churches would not bear an actual negative of the elderſhip, whether in a ſingle perſon or more. Nothing of moment was carried from the beginning, without the explicit conſent of the fraternity. Nor had they the leaſt notion of ſurrendering this priviledge, much leſs of ſuffering ſiſter churches either diſtinctly or conjunctly to have any juriſdiction over them. So far from this, and ſo full were they of the ideas of plenary congregational power, that it was held a general principle, that individual churches had not only the uncontrolled power of paſtoral *elections*, but of the

paſtoral

paſtoral inveſt ture, *ordination* or appo intment; which even the firſt worthy miniſters, as well as h che, held to be the leſſer act.

Having taken this ſurvey, we are prepared to judge on the platform itſelf, the ſenſe in whic it was conceived, the amended ſenſe in which it paſſed the ſynod of 1648, and the ſenſe in which it was, through the recommendation of the general aſſembly, received by the churches, and laſtly the ſenſe in which, by act of legiſlature, it in effect became the eccleſiaſtical provincial eſtabliſhment of *Maſſachuſetts* and *New-Hampſhire* and *Connecticut*. For by acts of legiſlature in theſe provinces parochial contracts for the ſupport of the congregational clergy are enforceable at law. And theſe acts having received the royal ſanction conſtitute congregationaliſm a *legal* eſtabliſhment. As to the platform itſelf, it is evident that it leaves the ſcriptures to be the ſole rule of faith, ordinances and diſcipline. As to what relates to authority and polity, tho' the compilers hoped to have introduced a triumvirate presbytery in each congregation to the reception of the churches, yet the authority of ſuch presbytery was confined to ſuch churches as received it, all being at liberty to uſe it or diſuſe it. That while the diſcipline and rule ſhould at leaſt in part veſt in the elderſhip of the presbyteriated churches, the whole ſhould veſt in the fraternity of the congregational ones. And that no power ſhould be ceded to councils as ſuch. Accordingly the platform leaves each church with plenary unceded power, making the councils and ſynods adviſory only and pro re nata or occaſional:—not excepting the extraordinary caſe of excommunicating a whole church, for this is not to be done by the council, but to obtain only upon the acts of particular churches. In the third way of communion, the judgment of the ſynod or council for declaring non-communion againſt an offending church is of no efficacy, but by "particular churches approving and accepting the judgment

" of the ſynod *," and reſpectively declaring the ſentence of non-communion in each church. Thus at length with a multitude of interſperſions ſecuring the independency and uncontrolable power of the churches, it was paſſed and received as the plan of public confederacy, which united the *presbyterians* and *independents* under the one common title of congregationaliſts, before agreeing in doctrine, mode of worſhip, ordinances, and the ſelf-government of churches. This union did not introduce either to a juriſdiction over one another, but left them the full poſſeſſion of their unceded peculiarities. They agreed that admiſſions ſhould be by the voice of the brotherhood —differing in this, that the rule and government ſhould be divided between the elders and brethren in the one, and veſt wholly in the brotherhood of the other: and that the ceremonies of paſtoral inveſtiture might be performed by the elders of the one, and by delegated brethren of the other. The enjoyment of both theſe peculiarities was covenanted to remain to both reſpectively, without breach of charity or the union. It was a fundamental principle of the union, that every voluntary aſſembly of chriſtians had power to form, organize and govern themſelves, and in imitation of the apoſtolic churches to gather and incorporate themſelves by a public covenant, and to elect and ordain all their public officers. They held communion with all proteſtant churches; yet held a peculiar fellowſhip with the churches of their peculiar way and order: and thence the matters of principal moment, ſuch as the gathering of churches and ordinations of paſtors, they tranſacted in the preſence of the delegates of other churches, whom they invited and called in as *witneſſes* of their faith and order. The eſſence of paſtoral ordination they held to conſiſt in the election and public covenant between the paſtor and the church. The ceremony of paſtoral inſtitution they held to be the leſſer act, which yet ought to be performed as the gathering of a church with faſting

* Platform.

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and prayer. The conducting of which religious ceremony was left to the elders in the presbyterian churches—in churches where there was no elder, the platform recommended the calling in and employing of the neighboring paſtors to aſſiſt in ordination; yet with an explicit conceſſion that even this might be performed "by brethren "orderly choſen out of the church for this purpoſe". This inſertion with others ſhews the popular ſenſe of liberty in our churches at that time: and the ſubſequent practice ſuggeſts the true idea of ordination councils, as uſed in theſe churches.

The ſenſe in which the platform was received may be further collected from the effect with which it has obtained. The popular ſenſe was too ſtrong for the plan conceived by the clergy. The churches were really congregational from the beginning, and never fond of a presbytery for rule and government, nor were they ever pleaſed with the idea of a mixed congregationaliſm deviſed by our wiſe fore-fathers, in which the power was divided between the elders and the brethren. Nor did the diſtinction of presbyterian and independent, and differences thereon ſubſiſt ſo much among the churches, as between the churches and the miniſters—the miniſters were for presbytery, the churches for congregationaliſm unmixt. It was natural then for them, being left at liberty, to uſe it. Hence the diſtinctions have long ſince been loſt in the one common name of congregationaliſts. The *lay-elder* (if this be not a ſoleciſm) is almoſt intirely droped *; and the *teaching elder* as diſtinct from *paſtor* has long ſince been diſuſed. Truly neither of theſe ever obtained in many of our churches after the firſt generation. Two officers of the triumvirate ceaſing, the diſciplinary authority of conſequence veſts in the fraternity: unleſs perhaps in the few churches originally mixt (for I know of none, or not more than one of the firſt churches purely presbyterian) where the paſtor may continue

* Some few churches have two ruling elders, and ſome twelve.

continue to retain a negative on the church, or in the language of our anceſtors, where the power of rule is in the elder, and the power of priviledge only in the brethren. And under the umbraze of thoſe clauſes ſecuring this power to the elders of presbyterinted churches, the paſtors of ſome churches purely congregational have claimed and aſſumed this power. But according to the true principles of congregationaliſm, the paſtor, beſides being moderator of church meetings, or preſident of the chriſtian fraternity, has but the authority of a private brother in the rule and government of the church. The platform happily ſucceded in preventing lay-ordinations. And as to councils, they ſtand juſt as the platform provided at the invitation and election of the particular church, and in their deciſions *adviſory* only. This is the polity on which the body of the New England churches now ſtand, except a few who have formed themſelves on the true presbyterian model according to Scotland, conſiſting chiefly of acceſſions of the preſent century, and a number of the Connecticut churches.

Having conſidered the nature of *congregational cauncils*, I procede to ſhew the origin and nature of *conſociated councils*, which obtain in Connecticut. So early as 1662 there were propoſals in the ſynod at Boſton drawn up by Mr. Shepard, for reſolving the whole body of the churches into conſociations, that is, that each diſtrict of neighboring churches ſhould by their paſtors and meſſengers aſſemble annually in a ſtanding council to hear and give judgment on eccleſiaſtical controverſies. But this propoſal dropt, not being acceded to by the churches, but ſtrongly oppoſed by them, as they judged themſelves poſſeſſed of ſufficient power to govern themſelves. A few years after this, the miniſters of ſeveral vicinities had formed themſelves into aſſociations or paſtoral meetings for prayer on occaſion of the indian wars *: theſe aſſociations having continued about

* The ASSOCIATIONS begun about A. D. 1670 : the firſt CONSOCIATIONS A. D. 1709.

about 30 years, began to be deſirous of aſſuming the conſociated form—which might eaſily be done if the churches could be prevailed on to delegate ſome of the brethren to accompany the miniſters and ſit with them in their paſtoral meeting, and withal prevail on the churches to refer their difficulties to this annual or biſannual aſſembly. Several of the miniſters had urged all the ſpecious arguments, but without ſucceſs. The early anticipated danger of introducing what might finally terminate in foreign juriſdiction, prevented the churches from acceding to the propoſals of 1662. In 1700 theſe propoſals were ripened into a formal plan for erecting the *aſſociations* into *conſociations* or ſtanding councils with the moſt abſolute power and juriſdiction over the churches; admitting appeals only to a *general conſociation* compoſed of delegates from the ſeveral particular conſociations, and veſted with a definitive binding ſentence. This plan begun to paſs the aſſociations in 1705, as a previous ſtep to its being recommended and adopted by the churches. But the oppoſition it met with from moſt of the aſſociations, and the yet unaſſociated paſtors again prevented its being recommended to the churches, where it would have met with ſtill greater oppoſition through the ſpirit of liberty. Though it failed in the Maſſachuſetts, yet two years after, it was reſumed and carried into execution among the churches of Connecticut, which at this time were, as I take it, univerſally congregationaliſts, tho' ſeveral of the principal miniſters were inclined to the presbyterian rule and government of churches. There were at this time about 40 churches in that colony. On the recommendation of the provincial legiſlature, which had been previouſly procured, * the *paſtors* and *meſſengers* of the churches in the four counties aſſembled in four ſeparate conventions, and draughted or paſſed four prepared models of church diſcipline, as nearly reſembling

* Very much through the influences of the honorable Gurdon Saltonſtall, Eſq; Governor of the colony, a learned divine, who had been formerly one of the paſtors.

ſembling that of 1705 as the ſpirit of the churches and paſtors would admit, for ſeveral of the principal paſtors were truly congregational. Theſe ſeparate conventions delegated each perhaps two or more paſtors with their reſpective meſſengers, to meet in a general convention, and compoſe out of the ſeveral remitted models a plan of diſcipline for public eſtabliſhment. Theſe delegates from the county conventions aſſembled at *Saybrook* in 1708, to the number of perhaps 10 or 12 paſtors, and perhaps twice as many meſſengers. This ſynod adopted the *Savoy confeſſion* * with the *heads of agreement*, which happily united the presbyterian and congregational brethren in *England*. Had they ſtopt here, the liberty of the churches had been ſecure. They alſo from the public ſenſe collected as above, compoſed *articles for the adminiſtration of church diſcipline*. I have been told that the model from New Haven county, ſaid to have been draughted principally by the reverend Mr. *James Pierpoint*, was that which with ſome amendments paſſed the ſynod. The ſynod having thus combined together the *confeſſion*, *heads of agreement*, and *articles for diſcipline*, as an eccleſiaſtical conſtitution; it was recommended by the general aſſembly of the colony, and received by moſt of the churches. A ſubſequent act of the general aſſembly has declared ſuch churches as accede to this conſtitution, to have a *legal eſtabliſhment* in that colony, not however excluſive of congregationaliſm, which has equally a legal eſtabliſhment. Thus there are three forms of religion eſtabliſhed in the german empire. In virtue of this agreement and conſtitution, the acceding churches were reſolved into four conſociations, which are now increaſed to nine. Theſe conſociations conſiſt of two eſtates, the *miniſters*, and *meſſengers*, in effect ſeparate in their acts; for though they ſit, deliberate and vote together in council, yet their acts are of ſeparate import; for

* Formed and agreed to by 120 congregational churches in England, aſſembled by their meſſengers in the Savoy London 1658.

for being two diſtinct bodies in point of cognizance & juriſdiction, they are ſo veſted with a negative on each other, that the concurrence of both in a certain new manner is neceſſary to complete an act of council*. There at preſent ſubſiſts a difference of ſentiment among worthy and pious men, who are real friends to the churches, reſpecting the *powers of churches*, and the powers of *conſociations*, which ſhall ſubordinate when in competition. This difference of ſentiment I take to be very little among the churches, nor between the paſtors and churches in general, but chiefly among the venerable clergy. The churches as I take it make no queſtion with reſpect to their own plenary and uncontrollable power. The preſent difference

* This platform by implication veſts a miniſter with a negative on his church in all her acts. And in council it has thrown a very great balance of power into the hands of the miniſters, even to more than a negative on the meſſengers. For a majority of the paſtors with ſo many of the meſſengers as make a majority of the council make a vote: but not a majority of the meſſengers and ſo many of the paſtors as make a majority of council. On the preſent footing, the churches have not an equal active repreſentation in council: they may indeed ſend as many meſſengers as they pleaſe, and this is the only way left them to retrieve the balance of power they loſt in 1708. Thus in a council of 20 paſtors and 20 churches, if the 20 churches ſend but one meſſenger each, then 15 paſtors and 6 meſſengers may make an act contrary to the ſenſe of 14 churches. This agreement then poſſibly ſubjects three quarters of the churches to the deciſion of the paſtors and one quarter of the churches. To reſtore the balance it is neceſſary to ſend three meſſengers at leaſt from each church. On the ſubject of power we are to conſider all the poſſible chances. Now though the churches have right to ſend three or more, yet it was eaſily foreſeen that there was no probability of their ſending more than two, and generally but one. Now on the whole two queſtions occur, whether the paſtors are veſted with this particular degree of power and influence in the rule of the churches by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? and whether this particular plan of diſcipline and conſtitution of councils is preſcribed in the ſcriptures? If not, the whole is a human agreement and confederacy, not at all partaking of the nature of a divine inſtitution: and though it may ſubſerve valuable purpoſes, is not to be conceived as an ordinance of God.

difference among the paſtors might be healed by charity and amicable condeſcentions, with the retention of their reſpective judgments as was done the laſt century upon the differences between the presbyterian and congregational paſtors as to church power. The litigation of paſtoral controverſies uneſpouſed by the churches, eſpecially on the ſubject of the paſtoral powers, excepting thoſe with which they are evidently inveſted by the great head of the church, is peculiarly unhappy in the preſent rapid increaſe of our churches, when it is our true intereſt for both paſtors and churches to be cemented by benevolence and union. The pretext on one ſide is hereſy: but hereſy is to be encountered in this age by reaſoning and appeals to the ſacred oracles, not by the deciſions of uninſpired councils. If councils were by the explicit voluntary act of the churches veſted with ten times more authority than is claimed for them by their warmeſt advocates, they could never decide the point. The ſcriptures are the only rule of proteſtants.

But whatever be the pretexts on either ſides, the powers of the conſociations being not known in the ſcriptures, are to be determined by an appeal to the platform that conſtitutes them. And in order to judge of this we muſt enter into the ſenſe and deſign with which it was conceived, and that in which it was adopted by the churches—that we may reconcile thoſe parts of it which interfere with, if they do not contradict, one another. Taken literally, it in the firſt place ſtipulates the abſolute unſubbordinate power of particular churches. It afterwards veſts the *conſociated council* with authorative final deciſion on all matters of diſcipline ſubmitted to it by the churches of the circuit. It at length veſts the council with general and original juriſdiction on "all occaſions eccleſiaſtical." It ſhould ſeem alſo by ſome expreſſions, that it is veſted with the *power of the keys*, the power of declaring non-communion on a particular church. Now the queſtion is,

whether

whether this amounts to transferring the power out of the churches into the council, in which they are thus repreſented? If it does, then there is a contradiction. And the next queſtion is, upon a competition, which ſhall looſe their power, the *particular churches*, or the *conſociation*? The *deciſive power* when aſſembled, and the power to aſſemble uncalled upon "*all occaſions eccleſiaſtical*," if bona fide ceded by the churches, amounts in my opinion to an intire and abſolute ſurrendery of all power and liberty from the churches, and may in time be claimed and demanded. For with ſuch power the conſociations may interdict any eccleſiaſtical proceſs in the churches on any eccleſiaſtical matter, and with ſuch prohibition remove it out of the hands of a particular church into the council. There remains then but one way in which the liberties of the churches are by this conſtitution ſecured, and if this be cloſed, their power and privilege is a cypher, viz. that the ſtanding council have no power but when called, and on the matters only ſubmitted by the church—even this would be a ſurrendery of more power than is ceded to *congregational councils*, which are *adviſory* only in their reſults; whereas the *conſociated councils* are *deciſive* in matters ſubmitted by the churches. Whatever was the ſenſe of the churches in adopting it, it is pretty evident that the platform itſelf is interlined with a clauſe veſting the conſociation, not only with the deciſion when called by the inviting church, but with original juriſdiction upon "all matters eccleſiaſtical," unleſs the phraſe "all occaſions eccleſiaſtical" be limited to diſcipline, or interpreted in ſubordination to the fundamental principle of the union, the uncontrollable power of particular churches.

Let us then conſider the ſenſe in which it was received by the churches. And here we are to remark that the platform itſelf provides and ſtipulates that "none of our "particular churches ſhall be ſubordinate to one another, "each being endowed with equality of power from Jeſus

" Chriſt: and that none of the ſaid particular churches, " their officer or officers ſhall exerciſe power or have any " ſuperiority over any other church or their officers." This was the baſis of the union—ſecuring this they agreed to unite in ſocial confederacy and fellowſhip. If any ſubſequent expreſſions intermixed in the articles of agreement ſhould ſeem to interfere with and contradict this principle, ſo as to transfer eventually the power out of the particular church in its individuate capacity—is it to be ſuppoſed the churches ratified them? rather is it not to be ſuppoſed that they interpreted them in a ſenſe ſubordinate to the firſt principle?

If the council has juriſdiction on all matters, whether ſubmitted or not; then the churches in their individual and ſeparate capacities may poſſibly have none at all, becauſe the council may poſſibly take cognizance of all. But if the council can take cognizance of one matter without the conſent of the church; then in that one caſe the church has no power. If it was firſt agreed that each in their ſeparate and individual capacities ſhould take cognizance and determine all matters within the church: and afterwards it was reſtricted to their repreſentation in council, would not this ſubvert the firſt principle? Was the thing ſo apprehended by the churches? Or can it be contended that the churches power and conſociations do not interfere, when the latter without the conſent of the former take a matter out of her hands and determine it? If the church puts it into the conſociation, her power is given up—ſhe has no deciſion of her own, but muſt ſubmit to the deciſion of the council, unleſs ſhe applied to the council for advice only, and not for a judicial decree. This is a great ſurrendery. But to veſt a foreign body with power to come and take a matter regularly depending and iſſuable in the church, and determine upon it contrary to the ſenſe of the church, is a ſtill greater, even an intire ſurrendery of all power, or at leaſt ſubmitting to

hold

hold it of the conſociation. And was this the ſenſe of the churches—of the 30 that firſt received it—and of the perhaps 100 new ones that have adopted it ſince? Is not this effectually to ſubordinate particular churches to one another? and enabling a number of churches and their officers to exerciſe power and have ſuperiority over another church and her officers? Or was it meant that truly one church ſhould not exerciſe dominion over another, unleſs ſhe could gain a number of her ſide, and then indeed ſhe might? And was it indeed the deſign of the churches to ſubordinate a particular church to the body? Would not each embodied church thus derive an acceſſion of power in her united capacity, and thus become veſted with an unavoidable ſuperiority? And does not this mutual acceſſion of power deſtroy the individual equality of churches, and effectually ſubordinate them to one another as well as to the body? If A B and C equal and unſubordinate, veſt one another with a controlling power, ſo that A cannot act without the conſent of B or C, and ſo for all—this is a mutual transferring of power; in which transferred or modeled power A B and C equally partake, and thus become *equal* in power. But does not this equality of acceſſional and interchangeable power deſtroy the *firſt equality?* and is not this peculiarly modelled equality a mutual ſubordination of the whole? It is moſt certainly. If ſo, the firſt or laſt muſt be given up. Liberty may infer equality of power; all equalities of power do not infer liberty. But if A B and C covenant that they will not act without the advice of one another, with reſervation of power to act contrary to advice, liberty and equality are ſaved. If they covenant that when they ſubmit a matter to one another it ſhall be final, and retain the power of ſubmitting, the *liberty* and *equality* are preſerved. It is the laſt ſenſe only in which the ſtipulated equality and liberty of the churches can be retained upon the Saybrook platform. *In all other ſenſes, equality may be re-*

tained but the liberty is loſt. Equality of power to be obedient and aſſiſt in inſlaving others, remains when the power of ſelf-government is loſt. But it is better to looſe our liberty into domeſtic than foreign hands. There are degrees in vaſſalage or ſubjection as well as of liberty. The fathers ſtipulated for the churches the moſt *perfect* liberty. It is poſſible in time there may be one or more provincial confederacies or generalities here, and an audience or common *council of ſtate* for civil adminiſtration ſtanding on free provincial elections. Even the *conſulate* and *ſenate* of the roman empire ſubſiſted a long time on elections, and theſe not ſeptennial or triennial but annual. There would be an eſſential difference between ſubordinating the provinces to the reſolutions of the ſupreme council of ſtate, tho' of their own electing; between this I ſay, and their reſerving to themſelves a power to ratify or annual thoſe reſolutions. Even the firſt is preferable to foreign appointments, and in a ſenſe may be ſaid to be a valuable liberty and privilege: but true genuine liberty conſiſts only with the laſt. The united provinces of Holland have found they can ſubſiſt in this manner: and after all that has been ſaid, this form of polity is not more liable to convulſions and revolutions than any other. But however it may be in other reſpects, it is certain that with reſpect to LIBERTY, the provinces will prefer that plan of confederacy which reſerves to them in their ſeparate capacities the approbation or diſapprobation of the plans or political meaſures conceived and remitted to them from the ſupreme common council. And ſuppoſing the fundamental baſis of ſuch a union, was the *equality, uncontrollable power* of ſelf government in each province, and that no province or provinces, or their officers, ſhall have any power over any other province or its officers: And ſuppoſing while defining the buſineſs of the common council, as how that it is to take cognizance of "*all matters political*" in any or all the provinces, with

with power to aſſemble on "all occaſions political," there ſhould alſo be intermixed ſome ſtrong general expreſſions reſpecting the power of the council amounting in their literal ſenſes and perhaps in the intended ſenſe of thoſe who inſerted them, to an abſolute power and irreſiſtable dominion: And after the council was introduced to the reception of the provinces, chiefly thro' the ſtipulated ſecurity of liberty; the council ſhould undertake de novo to enforce ſome of their reſolutions by the unnoticed and liquidated clauſes of the conſtitution: I ſay ſuppoſing all this, would not the provinces feel their liberty touched? And would it not be wiſdom for them all to unite in oppoſition, unleſs the council dropt their claims? Would not this be the event, unleſs the ſpirit of liberty was extinguiſhed or embarraſſed by management?—If this *council of ſtate* be by conſtitution veſted with the judicial deciſion of all matters of difficulty *ſubmitted* to it by any of the provinces of the union, it will nearly reſemble the *conſociations*. If the *council of ſtate* only deliberate for the public good and remit ſuch deliberations to the provinces, and on application of a province upon difficult emergencies give their definitive ſentence, i. e. the reſult of their opinion and advice, it will nearly reſemble the *congregational councils*. If the *council* have abſolute power over "all matters political" in all the provinces, and in virtue of this can interdict all lower proceſſes, and remove all cauſes before it, without the conſent of the province, and even contrary to it take a matter out of its hands and judicially determine it, and enforce this judicial deciſion on the province, on penalty of ejecting it from the union; it will nearly reſemble the *conſociations* in the ſenſe of ſome of the worthy paſtors.

The churches felt the importance of reſerving to themſelves the ſubmiſſion of cauſes to the conſociation. They at once perceiv'd, that if the conſociation could of their own motion aſſemble upon a church and authoritatively take

take out of her hands the judicial deciſion of cauſes, their liberty was gone. Accordingly, when April 13, 1709 the churches of New Haven county, by their paſtors and meſſengers firſt formed themſelves into a conſociation, in conſequence of the Saybrook agreement, they acceded to the agreement upon certain reſtricting explanations, which ſhew as well the public ſpirit of liberty, as the ſenſe in which they adopted the platform. In theſe explanations it was ſtipulated that a majority, both of meſſengers and paſtors was neceſſary to an act—that the ſentence of non communion was not definitive, nor to be declared till it had paſſed the approbation of particular churches—that "churches may call a council before they precede to "cenſure, but without their allowance no particular perſon "ſhall have a council before excommunication:" Eſſentially agreeable to that fundamental principle of their union, "that none of our particular churches ſhall be ſubordinate to one another, "nor exercciſe power, or have any ſuperiority over any other church, or their officers." No ſubſequent expreſſions to be taken in a ſenſe ſubverſive of this, becauſe in themſelves null and void.

On the whole, it ſeems to appear that however the power and ſubordinate equality of churches is ſecured in the beginning of the platform, yet there are afterwards ſuch inſertions, which, if taken literally, would ſubvert the firſt indiſpenſable principle. In conſequence and under the umbrage of which it is demanded as a right that each conſociation, charged with the inſpection of its churches, have power to arraign and depoſe a paſtor without, and even contrary to, the conſent of his church,—take "all cauſes eccleſiaſtical" out of the hands of the church, and judicially decide them—and if the church denies this power and juriſdiction, to arraign the whole church, deciſively judge upon her, and enforce their decree with the ſentence of non-communion. In this ſenſe it ſhould ſeem that the conſtitution has eſtabliſhed two powers inconſiſtent

conſiſtent in exerciſe, the *uncontrolled power* of particular churches, and the *controlling power* of the conſociations. And if the ſpirit of liberty did not prevent, it may become a rule for the conſociations in virtue of the clauſe, "all "occaſions eccleſiaſtical,"* to iſſue prohibitions to the churches (which has been tried in one inſtance) to remove ſuch cauſes as they the conſociation think proper, out of the hands of the churches, by a *certiorari* into the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical tribunal. But this was not the ſenſe of the churches, when they received the platform. The principal alteration which they deemed was this, that whereas the congregational councils were elected promiſcuouſly from the churches, the churches were now limited to the conſociated council as a ſtanding council on matters of diſcipline, which they veſted with a deciſive power on matters which they ſubmitted to them—and which they might on all other matters repair to, adviſe with and conſult as congregational councils. A hiſtory of the conſociations from the beginning to this time, and the uſe which the churches have made of the conſociations, would abundantly evince this. It is further to be remembered, that they never once thought of any alterations reſpecting ordination councils, and leaſt of all, that the conſociation excluſive ſhould have the power of ordination in the circuit, as appears from the uninterrupted uſuage of the churches for the firſt 40 years after the platform, in which I ſuppoſe there was not a ſingle inſtance of *conſociated* ordinations. All theſe claims are of modern date, and defenſible only upon thoſe novel interpretations which are ſubverſive of the firſt grand fundamental principle of the union. The Connecticut churches remain at liberty to chuſe what miniſters they pleaſe, to ordain their paſtors elect, and what churches they pleaſe

* The extenſive juriſdiction of the High Commiſſion ſubſiſted on a like comprehenſive clauſe, "all affairs eccleſiaſtical." The force and application of which was felt by the holy and venerable *Cotton, Norton, Hooker.* See *Hume*'s Hiſtory of Britain, Vol. i. p. 37.

pleaſe for a fraternal witneſs of the ſolemnity, and from whom alſo to aſk and receive the *right hand of fellowſhip*. For the right hand of fellowſhip may either upon the principles of chriſtianity, or the platform, be as regularly received from the congregational churches, as the conſociated ones, even by the conſociated churches themſelves, as has been repeatedly the fact. The fellowſhip and communion is indiſcriminately held among both. The paſtors alone with the content of the electing church, ordain the paſtor elect; and in the name of themſelves and the churches, give the right hand of hand of fellowſhip, to denote their willingneſs to walk together in paſtoral and church communion.

As the platforms are ſuppoſed to receive great efficacy from their becoming provincial eſtabliſhments, it is neceſſary to conſider this alſo. Antecedent to the platforms, the three colonies of Plymouth, Maſſachuſetts and Connecticut, made and continued to make pariſhes by acts of their reſpective aſſemblies, and veſted them with power to tax themſelves for the ſupport of ſuch paſtors and teachers as they ſhould elect. The ſame thing was continued after the platforms were adopted by the reſpective acts of legiſlature as provincial eſtabliſhments, and eſpecially after the preſent charters. Which acts in the provinces of Maſſachuſetts and New-Hampſhire, receiving the Royal ſanction after the revolution, as fully eſtabliſh congregationaliſm in thoſe two provinces, as the acts of parliament and the union eſtabliſh epiſcopacy in South Britain, and presbytery in North Britain. And the aſſembly of Connecticut being veſted by royal charter with plenary legiſlative power, the religious eſtabliſhment of that colony is compleat, as all her other legiſlative acts are, without the royal ſanction: eſpecially as it is an eſtabliſhment of the ſame thing which has received the royal approbation in the neighbouring province, which gives a declared conſtruction of that particular law or act, as not being contrary to the acts of parliament;

ment: eſpecially this is conſentaneous to that part of the act of union which eſtabliſhes a ſimilar religious inſtitution for Scotland. Now all the force which a particular form of religion receives from a civil eſtabliſhment, whether national or provincial, is from the temporalities and civil immunities annexed by the legiſlature. With regard to immunities and public ſecular offices, all religious proteſtant ſects are equally privileged in New-England. But the legal power to tax a ſociety for the maintenance of miniſters, and other parochial charges, belongs to but one general denomination, the *congregationaliſts*, under their ſomewhat different forms, excepting that the epiſcopalians in Connecticut, under certain limitations, have power to tax themſelves. And legally thoſe churches or aſſemblies that are independent presbyterians, or Scotch presbyterians, or congregationaliſts truly ſuch, or laſtly congregationaliſts on the Saybrook model, are congregational only in law. The law conſiders them, not as churches purely,* but as as parochial congregations, allowed in their religious form to model themſelves as they pleaſe, as they judge moſt agreeable to the ſcriptures. The legal efficacy of their acts reſults, not from the religious form, but from the parochial powers with which they are endowed. The pariſhes are to certain purpoſes incorporate, bodies known in the law; the efficacy of parochial contracts all iſſue from the parochial powers; and the contracts with paſtors depend not at all for their validity in law, upon any of the forms of ordination, whether performed by elders in a church and paſtors out of the church, or whether indeed there be no ordination at all. For I ſuppoſe if a pariſh in their parochial corporate capacity ſhould contract with an unordained preacher at an annual ſtipend for life, upon con-

* The churches, as diſtinct from the congregation, are bodies corporate to the purpoſe of receiving and improving benefactions, and holding eſtates ad pios uſus; but not for taxing themſelves for the ſupport of the miniſtry.

dition of his performing divine ſervice every Lord's-day, that it would be equally valid in law as if he was ordained, or equally valid as if made with a ſchool-maſter for life or during good behavior. And this ſeems ſtill more evident, not only from the nature of parochial powers, but from hence, that the paſtoral contract of legal validity antecedes ordination in all caſes. Unleſs the parochial call and acceptance be deemed only preparatory to the public enſealing and ratification of the contract: yet even here, the tranſaction which induces legal obligation is only that part of ordination in which the call and acceptance is publicly ratified—and yet as this is a covenant only between the paſtor and church, and not explicitly between the paſtor and congregation, which is only eccleſiaſtical, it ſhould ſeem that that which has legal efficacy on the inhabitants of the pariſh or congregation as ſuch, is the antecedent contract. But ſuppoſing it depends on ordination, and that the legal covenant is not perfected till the ſolemnities of the inveſtiture: yet by the univerſal practice of our churches, the ordination may be performed by whomſoever the church deſire to do it. And in inſtallments in particular, it is indifferent whether this antecedent ordination has been performed by congregational paſtors, or by thoſe who have had ordination according to the church of Scotland. All paſtors have the power of ordination, and can confer holy orders on whomſoever they judge qualified, and at the deſire of a particular church can give him the paſtoral charge of that church—when ſuch paſtor is ordained, and ſuch church organized with a paſtor to all purpoſes civil as well as eccleſiaſtical. And though it is always deſirable that there ſhould be a harmony among the churches, and though perhaps it would not be prudent for the church to deſire it, or the paſtors to perform it upon the ſure proſpect of diſunion, yet when it is done, whether agreeable or diſagreeable to ſiſter churches and congregations, the parochial immunities are unhurt, and the procedure

procedure valid both eccleſiaſtically and legally, ſo far as the law takes any notice of it. This was early and all along the practice of our churches, and the platforms have induced no alterations in it.

The whole religious eſtabliſhment of New England is congregationaliſm, except in the colony of Rhode Iſland, where the legiſlative eſtabliſhment is univerſal proteſtant liberty, but without annexing parochial privileges to any ſect. Here no religious congregations or ſocieties are bodies known in the law, and all benefactions, regularly ought to be made to *feoffees in truſt*. In the three other New England governments, all parochial congregations are bodies corporate. The legiſlature of Connecticut in particular have enacted, "that the inhabitants of any town "or ſociety or pariſh conſtituted by this aſſembly who are "preſent at a town or ſociety meeting legally warned, "ſhall have power by the major vote of thoſe ſo met to "call and ſettle a miniſter or miniſters among them"—and "that the miniſter ſo called and ſettled ſhall be the "miniſter of ſuch town or ſociety."—"and all agree-"ments—made by the major part of the inhabitants—"with ſuch miniſter or miniſters reſpecting his or their "ſettlement, &c. ſhall be binding and obligatory on all "the inhabitants of ſuch town or ſociety—and their ſuc-"ceſſors." And again, "all ſuch towns and ſocieties or "pariſhes by their proper votes or acts ſhall annually—"grant a tax for the purpoſe aforeſaid, to be levied on "their inhabitants according to their reſpective liſts." From hence it appears, that all which induces legal obligations is to be done by the inhabitants or members of the congregation—the act of the church in paſtoral election as diſtinct from the congregation is not neceſſary, though I ſuppoſe univerſally practiced, except in one inſtance. The churches as ſuch are legal bodies for receiving and holding eſtates, but not for regulating the ſettlement of paſtors. In this the laws univerſally conſider the

parochial inhabitants in a congregational capacity, whether the church in the pariſh be *congregational, conſociated, presbyterian* or *ſcriptural.*

If a pariſh church on the congregational platform ſhould for reaſons renounce it for the Saybrook, or laſtly ſhould renounce both for the purely ſcriptural model: the pariſh is the ſame pariſh, amidſt all the mutations of its church, enjoying the ſame civil and legal immunities and powers, and is treated by the legiſlature as all other pariſhes of the congregational platform. And however the churches may have confederated among themſelves and may be affected by the deciſions of council; yet the pariſh congregation, or the churches conſidered as part of the parochial congregation are unaffected—if in its eccleſiaſtic capacity it is affected, in its congregational it is not: its ſpiritualities may be touched, but not its temporalities. Whenever theſe ſhall be connected—the affecting the one will ſenſibly affect the other. But as the caſe now ſtands, if the conſociation aſſume even the deciſion with which by the platform it is veſted (much more, ſhould it happen to aſſume an unſurrendered conſtitutional juriſdiction) and decree contrary to the ſenſe of the *congregation* and the pariſh *church*; the *firſt* is not touched—and one vote which they have power to make among themſelves withdraws the *latter* from this juriſdiction, without the leaſt detriment to her temporalities or eccleſiaſtical liberty:—as has been repeatedly done: nay, if even excommunicated by the whole body of churches, yet has ſhe the ſame legal privileges as all the others. When a church and congregation have become large, they often on differences divide: the minor or withdrawing part form by ſpontaneous voluntary act into a congregation, and gather a church, and elect a paſtor, whom they requeſt ſome of the neighbouring paſtors to ordain and confer holy orders upon. All this is done or may be done, for it has been often done from the beginning, antecedent to the aſſembly's forming them

into

into a pariſh. Now whenever it has received pariſh powers, it is in all reſpects ſecure as to its temporalities, whether the church be in followſhip with the body of churches or not. A new pariſh may be erected in the old parochial bounds on the application of aggrieved brethren: but the ſtanding party remain and continue a pariſh, and even the firſt pariſh and church as they hold under the firſt, and not a ſubſequent appointment. And in all inſtances in Connecticut but one, the two pariſhes formed within the ſame parochial bounds are of different forms as to their churches. And the act of aſſembly incorporating a new pariſh into a body known in the law, does not deſtroy the firſt pariſh, nor affect its antecedent acts and agreements "made by the major vote of the inhabitants." This whether the firſt pariſh church be conſociated, congregational, or presbyterian; whether this year the one, or by vote of itſelf the next year another.

This being the ſtate of the religious eſtabliſhments in New-England, and in Connecticut in particular, it appears that all claims of councils or conſociations, with reſpect to juriſdictions and deciſions in oppoſition to the ſenſe of particular churches and parochial congregations, may be fruitleſs and to little purpoſe, beſides a temporary embroiling of the churches. Beſides, that through ſome unhappy principles reſpecting the terms of communion and the qualification of communicants, by which multitudes of ſober, pious and virtuous chriſtians are deterred from the ordinances, our churches are often but a ſmall part of the parochial congregations. And it is the congregation in its parochial congregational capacity that the law conſiders: And this as ſuch does not enough partake of an eccleſiaſtical nature to be ſubject to eccleſiaſtical juriſdictions; or to have the validity of any of its acts dependent on the deciſions of an eccleſiaſtical council. And even as to the influence of theſe deciſions on the churches as ſuch, they perhaps had better be left as thoſe of the congregational

councils

councils *adviſory* only, according to the ſenſe in which it is probable that the Connecticut churches received their platform. All that is beyond this, till the public ſpirit be ſubdued, muſt endanger conteſts and oppoſitions, in which the public benevolence and liberty may ſuffer. And it is to be remarked, that even conſociated churches have often called in congregational councils to adviſe on difficulties; which ſhews that they did not underſtand themſelves reſtricted to the conſociated councils. And it is further to be remarked, that the churches of the apoſtolic age knew nothing of conſociated or congregational councils, nor their powers; but ſubſiſted in the full enjoyment of unembarraſſed liberty. No apoſtolic church had authority over another, either in an individual or aggregate capacity. The claims of authority in conſociated councils over the churches, are not only contrary to the primitive pattern, but probably will not prevail in New-England, unleſs the legiſlatures enact that no congregational churches ſhall have benefit of the laws. It is ſaid that there are ſeveral churches in Connecticut which have not acceded to the platform, moſt of which are congregational; and yet have the ſame immunities and privileges with the others. And any may renounce the platform when they pleaſe, as has been done in ſome inſtances, and yet are in full charity and communion with the conſociated churches. It might be happy if they could all walk together on the conſociated form, as they probably would do in time, if the conſociation ſubſiſted for fellowſhip only, and not for dominion, which eſſentially interferes with the ſtipulated equality of churches. Nor can the conſociations regularly, I mean conſiſtently, declare non-communion with one of theſe congregational churches, unleſs they do with all—if the cauſe or crime be only their denial of their juriſdiction, becauſe they well know that all congregational churches agree in denying this juriſdiction. Nor was it originally deſigned by the Saybrook council, or the Connecticut

necticut Aſſembly, or laſtly by the receiving churches, that all or any of the uncomplying congregational churches, ſhould for this be hereticated, or held under the ſentence of non-communion. Nor that every church acceding to the union ſhould be obliged to ſend delegates to the conſociation in all cauſes: as to this, they were at their liberty. And the churches have frequently omitted this, as I am told. Nor can a conſociation regularly by the platform declare non-communion jure ſynodali, for this, or a real crime in the church ſuppoſed offending, eſpecially in New-Haven county, becauſe the churches of that circuit, at their firſt forming into a conſociation in 1709, expreſly covenanted that the ſentence of non-communion ſhould be referred back to the particular churches of the circuit, and obtain on their particular acts. Hence half a dozen churches may for preſent reaſons decline ſending their elders and meſſengers to a conſociation for ſuch time as they pleaſe, and yet continue members of the union, and remain upon the platform, and may afterwards reſume their rights, till ſuch time as they voluntarily renounce the union, or are excommunicated by the acts of the particular churches of the circuit. In which laſt caſe, and even before if they pleaſe, they may meet by their delegates and form a new conſociation, and become a true conſociation of a new circuit, and regular upon the platform—not ſubject to the conſociation of another circuit—unleſs in ſome future progreſs of alteration in the policy, all the conſociation ſhould be ſubjugated to the controll of a general conſociation. In which caſe the new conſociation might ſubſiſt a ſovereignty of itſelf, denying the juriſdiction of all foreign powers. New-Haven conſociation, when firſt formed, conſiſted of but *five* churches.

The eſſential laws of eccleſiaſtical fellowſhip and the Saybrook platform require that, in all excommunications, whether of perſons or churches, this meaſure is not to be gone into without giving opportunity to the perſons or churches

churches to be hereticated to make their defence, and ſhew their reaſons to the church or churches of the vicinity, that they may act on their own knowledge and judgment, and not the report of others. If then they ſuſtain excommunication, they revert to the ſtate of congregational churches; out of union indeed with the conſociated churches of the circuit, but holding all the privileges of the legal eſtabliſhment, and remaining in union and fellowſhip with only the greateſt body of churches in New-England, I mean thoſe on the Cambridge platform, if not perhaps with thoſe of the other conſociated circuits, that is, they will or may poſſibly be in unity, with about 400 churches, and out of unity with 100, perhaps not above 50. All this is ſaid upon ſuppoſition that the ejected church or churches be the ſame as to doctrine and manner of worſhip with the generality of the churches, and that the denial of foreign eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction be the *only* reaſon of non-communion. As was the caſe in the only inſtance of hereticating a church in New-England.

This is the caſe as matters now ſtand. We have ſeen what efficacy the platforms have received from the legiſlative regulations about religion. And that in effect they have not entered into any of the diſtinctions, but conſider all only as different ſpecies of congregationaliſm. All that is done is only to incorporate the congregation—the congregations model themſelves as they pleaſe. No temporalities or immunities are annexed to any unions or combined cluſters of churches, or to any public reſolutions iſſuing from ſuch combination. Perhaps it would be well if all our churches were reſolved into friendly conſociations for mutual aid and fellowſhip. All unions indeed forming an aggregate of powers, are liable, and too apt to terminate in juriſdictions. Not that theſe coalitions are abſolutely neceſſary. The apoſtolic churches ſubſiſted without either—as I have ſaid they knew not either conſociations or claſſes or their powers—and whenever they take

take place they muſt obtain on other preſcriptions than thoſe particularly ſpecified by the apoſtles, or our common Lord. But though the cantoning a body of churches into generalities and circuits, be not abſolutely neceſſary, and in no wiſe ſcriptural, yet it may ſubſerve valuable purpoſes. Many of theſe things, not entering into the eſſence of religion, are left to human diſcretion. The late reverend Dr. COLMAN was a friend to conſociations of churches, but not in a ſenſe ſubverſive of congregationaliſm, for he looked upon them not the deſtruction, but the "very ſoul and life of the congregational ſcheme"—Now they would prove the death of the congregational ſcheme if the churches be ſubordinated to their juriſdictions, *for of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in bondage* *, and this even *while they promiſe themſelves liberty.* Fellowſhip and benevolence, not dominion, was the great characteriſtic of this venerable divine, whoſe praiſe is in all the churches. He patronized the moſt congregational act which was ever practiſed in theſe churches, in an inſtance which poſterity may ſee the wiſdom of imitating. And he was too well acquainted with antiquity not to be ſenſible that the grand defection of the latin church took origin in thoſe artfully deforced ceſſions which ſubverted the liberty, independence and plenary power of churches. So long as the power continued in the hands of the churches, undelegated to repreſentation by perpetual decree or binding conſtitution, they were ſafe as the apoſtles planted and left them :—but this ceded and given up, they paſſed into an inteſtine oppreſſion, more barbarous than the pagan perſecutions.

The churches are at preſent above 500, and increaſing amain. They might form 20 conſociations beſides thoſe of Connecticut. And if formed without juriſdiction, they would nobly ſubſerve the purpoſe of cementing us together into a reſpectable body. But the moment juriſdiction

 enters,

* 2 Pet. ii. 19.

enters, like the creating *Cæſar* perpetual DICTATOR, the beginning of the abſolute loſs of liberty commences.* Let the conſociations be *adviſory* only to the churches, as the privy council to his majeſty, the aſſembly of the ſtates to the *united provinces*; even general provincial conſociations of the ſame import *adviſory only*, might have a friendly influence *ſalvâ Libertate & Jure Eccleſiarum univerſalium.* An influence which one would think ſhould content the eccleſiaſtical councils. But even this, let it be remembered, would be but a human device of polity, neither preſcribed or ſuggeſted by Chriſt or his apoſtles; and having nothing of divine in it, not being ſo much as an ordinance of God, but a voluntary agreement only of men. And conſequently the deciſions and reſults of councils ought not to be put off upon the churches as an ordinance of the moſt high, who is never to be brought in to patronize the fallible decrees of mortals uninſpired, which are ſometimes delivered to the churches in the name of God, with ſtrong expreſſions importing that the contempt and diſobedience of them is contempt and diſobedience of the moſt high. *Nec Deus interſit niſi dignus vindice nodus.* There needs the utmoſt caution leaſt the opinions and canons of councils be conceived in this light. For however

* The procedure is gradual from artfully deforced ſurrenderies of power to abridgments firſt, and afterwards an intire abolition of liberty. The roman and athenian ſenates were originally formed to deliberate and recommend the beſt meaſures of public action. The ſenate conceived and prepared plans for the public ratification of the people, with whom was the ſupreme aggregate power. This origination in the ſenate was called *auctoritas*, denoting ſtill for 300 years no proper power. In time the ſenate ſhared half the power, the plebeians under different claſſes the other. At length the intire imperial power was gained into repreſentation; and when this was ſettled into a perpetual conſtitution, it was finally in effect ſubjected to the controll of a perpetual dictatorſhip in one perſon; when liberty was loſt. Then and even before this *auctority* and *power* became ſynonymous. So *Reſults* of councils and *power* may import the ſame thing after proper ſtages.

ever in the commencement and infancy of a policy they are taken but adviſory, they may be drawn into preſcription and precedent by ſubſequent generations and ages. Antient cuſtoms become deemed to be eſtabliſhed conſtitutional powers and rights; and ſo the influence and aſcendency of a well conſtituted council or union of councils degenerate into tyranny. And future prieſts may, through weakneſs and ignorance of hiſtory and the love of dominion, imagin themſelves, as members of an eſtabliſhed council, to hold thoſe powers and influence jure divino, or by divine right, which a conſtitution or policy by imperceptible ſteps and inſenſible tranſitions acquires through a tract of time. In faithfulneſs therefore to poſterity and the truth, every preſent generation ſhould teach their riſing offspring the eſſential difference between what ariſes from human policy, and the inſtitutes of heaven: and that as the moſt high has not veſted any order of men ſince the apoſtolic age, with divine infallible authority, ſo none of their deciſions on or about religion partake in the leaſt degree of infallibility—not even the churches themſelves in their particular or aggregate capacity:—that eccleſiaſtical councils have no authority unleſs imparted by the churches, and this though eccleſiaſtical yet not divine:—and that if ever this be ceded or given up to the degree of controlling particular churches in a perpetual conſtitution, poſterity will again date the death of liberty from that unhappy æra—till future vigorous ſtruggles and united combined exertions of the public ſpirit ſhall reſume it into thoſe hands where God and nature placed it. The exigencies of the chriſtian church can never be ſuch as to legitimate, much leſs render it wiſe, to erect any body of men into a ſtanding judicatory over the churches. If on ſome extraordinary occaſions it may be neceſſary to cede up the united power into an extraordinary commiſſion; yet when the public work deſigned is accompliſhed, let the commiſſion end, the power revert

and reſt in the boſom of the churches. Never ſuffer the united force and power of the churches to be at the call, eſpecially at the command of a ſtanding body of men, even if part ſubſiſt on conſtitutional delegates from the churches. The ends of civil and eccleſiaſtical polity are ſo widely different, that however this may be expedient in the one, it is by no means ſo in the other. If the united force of the churches can be conſtitutionally collected and directed to ſuch objects and ends as a ſtanding council (liable to corruption and undue influence) ſhall command, without and contrary to the conſent of individual churches, whether the policy be a monarchy, or an oligarchy, it is indifferent—liberty is gone, tyranny and inteſtine oppreſſion may be the fate of ſucceeding generations. Our churches have not as yet given up their powers and liberty into foreign hands, at leaſt the main body have not, and it is queſtionable whether any have deſignedly and bona fide done it. Let them be taught to ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt has made them free. Heaven is giving us an opportunity to plant a noble body of free churches in America, and has charged us with a part to act for poſterity. The *love of dominion* which reigns in every breaſt, and thus becomes a general principle, is almoſt too mighty for that other general principle the *love of liberty*, which it is deſigned to balance. Take either away out of human nature, and confuſion ariſes. There is no need of cultivating the former, it is inextinguiſhable: but there is great need of cultivating the latter, eſpecially in religion. Liberty and dominion are in oppoſite balances on the ſcale of human nature—both neceſſary: the latter is dangerous unleſs well guarded; the former generally ſafe excepting when collecting for one public burſt on tyranny. They are deſigned by God to counterpoiſe and balance one another. There is no danger but the wanton licentiouſneſs of the one will be corrected by the artifice and force of the other. Neither

ther let liberty be extinguiſhed nor dominion; both have their proper ſpheres; when the one degenerates into tyranny and unneceſſary reſtraints, and when the other becomes anarchy, they are both equally pernicious to ſociety. The principles of both and their balance ought to be well underſtood, ſettled and defined, and the *fines quos ultra citraque nequit* be fixed on the public ſenſe, and their rationale publicly taught and explained thro' the community.

The body of the clergy in New-England might eaſily adopt a ſyſtem of eccleſiaſtical management, which in a century or two, with moderation and attention to the public ſpirit, would gently gain the ſubmiſſion of the churches, and inſenſibly ſteal away their liberty. But I rejoice to believe they are not inclined to it. Yet let me ſay that meaſures may be honeſtly, and with pious intent, gone into, which effect this as ſurely as if with the deſign and foreſight of a *Machiavel*, a *Richlieu*, or a *Mazarine*. The ſyſtem adopted deſignedly or undeſignedly, however looks with undeviating operation to the ſame end. Any thing of this nature may be wiſely oppoſed. Let us remain true and firm to our firſt principles, the unſurrendered power of the churches. And indeed there is need of the exerciſe of but little power here; for chriſtianity is not a ſyſtem of human power and dominion, but of liberty and benevolence.

To ſum up the whole, it appears from above, 1. That our churches were originally free and independent of one another. 2. That any plan of confederacy is juſt what it was agreed, explicitly received and underſtood to be by the confederating churches. 3. That ſuch confederacy, whatever be its form, is not jure divino, but intirely human and prudential: and was never deſigned to interfere with the independence and prerogative powers of particular churches. 4. Leaſt of all was it deſigned to regulate articles of faith, it being one of the fundamental and explicit

declarations

declarations of the churches, and even of the platforms, that the SCRIPTURES alone are the ONLY RULE of FAITH.* And 5. That ſuch are the circumſtances of our churches, ſo intermixt with ſects of various communion, that it is impolitic to uſe extreme and coercive meaſures—ſince the univerſal liberty permits the oppreſſed to form into voluntary coalitions for religious worſhip. 6. That ſtrong union being one main thing during the infancy of the churches, uniformity in leſſer matters is not to be rigorouſly exacted; but healing and uniting meaſures being a firſt point in view, many other things are to be ſubordinated to this. 7. That the ſpirit of diſunion is attended with more fatal prejudices in the ſwift growth of a body of churches, than when they are arrived to maturity. To which we may add, 8. That many conſiderable errors, if let alone, will correct themſelves in time on free inquiry, deliberate and unheated diſquiſitions.

But if different uſages and cuſtoms in eccleſiaſtical polity are finally ſettled in different churches, agreeing in the eſſentials of chriſtian doctrine and worſhip: this need not diſturb the general harmony. Men build their houſes differently, cultivate their lands differently, purſue the ſame employments in different methods, and in different methods ſtudy the ſciences—yet if they attain the end, it matters little as to the different means. An empire conſiſts of a multitude of cities, burroughs, towns and provinces, differently conſtituted by accident, according to the courſe of events, or according to the different geniuſes of the people conſociated. And yet in theſe different ways arrive at individual and public felicity. The plan that happily cements and unites all in one general confederacy and public union, reſerving to each part its power, liberty and proportionate influence in the mighty whole, is the wiſeſt and

* "The founders of our churches always profeſſed to make the ſacred "ſcriptures the only rule in matters of diſcipline and worſhip, as "well as in articles of faith." Hobart's Addreſs. p. 36.

and beſt. Coercive uniformity is neither neceſſary in politics nor religion*. All the kingdoms of the earth are differently policied, and yet all in their ſeveral ways ſubſerve the public deſign of the ſupreme king. Churches have ſubſiſted well under all the limitations of liberty—all have their conſtitutional diſeaſes. All proteſtant churches have different models under the general profeſſion, and yet we have charity for all. We are in full charity with churches which have loſt all their liberty, yet are ornaments to the chriſtian profeſſion. And among ourſelves, let it not break our communion if any of our churches give up all their liberty, or retain it all in their own hands. If the great end is anſwered of making men virtuous and good, let us rejoice, though the means are diverſified. Particularly let us of the congregational communion in New-England, under the different forms of our churches, cultivate a venerable regard for one another; rejoice that we are ſo well agreed in purity of doctrine and worſhip, and walk together by the ſame rule, *ſo far as we are agreed*: and for the reſt, let us endeavour to hope and think and ſpeak the beſt of one another, in all our differences, putting on forbearance, charity and a condeſcending benevolence.

III. I come now at length to conſider the expediency of harmony and union, eſpecially among the congregational churches in New-England. And,

1. The firſt argument may be taken from the importance of the cauſe in itſelf conſidered, its purity, its friendly aſpect on the public religious liberty, and its utility to the ſtate. I am perſuaded from a very thorough diſquiſition and ſearch, that there is no body of churches in the proteſtant world more nearly recovered to the ſimplicity and purity of the apoſtolic age. We need indeed ſome further purifications and amendments; which will doubtleſs take place

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place in proceſs of time on free inquiry and univerſal liberty, to the prevailing of which it is already impoſſible to put a ſtop. But in general our churches appear to me to be nearly on the ſame footing with the primitive churches, as left by the apoſtles, who doubtleſs left them completely inſtituted. Moſt other proteſtant churches are under embarraſſments from which we are free. If there be more liberty for free inquiry at preſent in ſome of them, it does not flow from the nature of their policy, but from the laudable moderation of their clergy, or other leſs honorable motives—And beſides, the avenues to this liberty are embarraſſed with diſhonorable compliances and ſubmiſſions. Any embarraſſments in our churches procede not from the nature of their policy, but from the ſpirit of the times, which muſt and will alter. If there be any true way of worſhipping the deity, the ſupreme Lord of nature, it may be in our manner: even deiſts muſt confeſs that our way is or may be natural and rational. And being poſſeſſed of the precious jewel of religious liberty, a jewel of ineſtimable worth, let us prize it highly, and eſteem it too dear to be parted with on any terms; leſt we be again entangled with that yoke of bondage * which our fathers could not, would not, and God grant we may never ſubmit to bear. The leſſer differences among ourſelves, which will at times unavoidably ſpring up in this imperfect militant ſtate, and afford a temporary diſturbance to the beſt conſtituted churches, will again ſubſide, and finally terminate in defining the limits of power, and in more accurately aſcertaining the terms of communion and univerſal benevolence. Providence has planted the britiſh America with a variety of ſects, which will unavoidably become a mutual balance upon one another. Their temporary colliſions, like the action of acids and alcalies after a ſhort ebullition, will ſubſide in harmony and union, not by the deſtruction of either, but in the friendly cohabitation

* Star-Chamber and High Commission.

bitation of all. An antecedent fermentation may take place, as it has done in the philoſophic world, but generous inquiry and liberal diſquiſition will iſſue all in this. Reſplendent and all-prevailing TRUTH will terminate the whole in univerſal harmony. All ſurreptitious efforts and attempts on the public liberty will unavoidably excite the public vigilance of the ſects, till the terms of general communion be defined and honorably adjuſted. The notion of erecting the polity of either ſect into univerſal dominion to the deſtruction of the reſt, is but an airy viſion —may ſerve to inflame a tempory enthuſiaſm—but can never ſuccede—all the preſent ſects will ſubſiſt & increaſe into diſtinct reſpectable bodies, continuing their diſtinctions for a long time yet to come in full life and vigor. Indeed mutual oppreſſion will more and more ſubſide from their mutual balance of one another. Union may ſubſiſt on theſe diſtinctions, coaleſcence only on the ſameneſs of public ſentiment, which can again be effected in the chriſtian world only by the gentle, but almighty power of truth. It has been effected in paſt ages, but can never be effected again on the former meaſures—ſo great an alteration is made among mankind by ſcience and letters. The ſects cannot deſtroy one another: all attempts this way will be fruitleſs—they may affect a tempory diſturbance, but cannot produce a diſſolution—each one ſubſerves the mutual ſecurity of all. The advantages taken by any one ſect over the ſecurity and indolence, or inteſtine broils of another, will ſoon eno' awaken its ſenſibility or moderation, and excite the ſpirit of ſelf-defence—and ſo for the whole. Such is human nature, eſpecially enlightened with the pure light of revelation and ſciences. Nothing however will content us but actual experiment—this experiment will be made in one century, and then perhaps we ſhall be ſatisfied. But to return from this digreſſion.

In order to perceive what particular ſect is moſt friendly to the public liberty, we need only take a ſurvey of the

religious eſtabliſhments in the ſeveral britiſh provinces on this continent. That civil eſtabliſhment is friendly to liberty, which either veſts all ſects with equal immunities, or ſecures each ſect from being obliged directly or indirectly to contribute to the public ſupport of others beſides themſelves. Where all ſects are equally eſtabliſhed there is properly no *toleration*, all partaking in the benefit of the eſtabliſhment. Where one ſect is inveſted with power to enforce taxes on themſelves for the ſupport of their clergy, and all others exempted from ſuch tax, there is a true and proper toleration, but perfectly eaſy, as ſuch diſſenters are exempted from miniſterial taxes. Where the eſtabliſhed clergy are ſupported by a branch of provincial revenues appropriated, and diſſenters are not exempted from contributing, and yet ſhare no part of ſuch appropriation, ſuch diſſenters are tolerated in the loweſt ſenſe, viz. on condition of their payment to the eſtabliſhed clergy. And it may ſo happen that the ſame ſects may be eſtabliſhed, or diſſenters in different provinces. So a ſcots presbyterian is a diſſenter in England, and an epiſcopalian a diſſenter in Scotland. Let us now take a view of the provincial eſtabliſhments. In *Nova Scotia* it is epiſcopacy, tho' the public believe it to be equal proteſtant liberty. In *New-Hampſhire, Maſſachuſetts* and *Connecticut*, made under the influence of congregationaliſts, it is *congregationaliſm*—but all other ſects are exempted from taxes for the ſupport of the congregational clergy. The miniſterial taxes of this ſect are enforceable at law—this is the principal advantage they enjoy above the diſſenters in thoſe provinces. In *Rhode-Iſland* it is univerſal equal proteſtant liberty, no ſect being enabled to enforce their miniſterial contracts at law. In *New-York* epiſcopacy is eſtabliſhed for the four firſt counties, where all diſſenters, miniſters and people are obliged to pay to the eſtabliſhed clergy, except ſo far as the Dutch churches in virtue of an original ſtipulation gained an exemption and eſtabliſhment. For the

other

other counties of that provi ce it is univerſal liberty. The religious eſtabliſhment of the *Jerſies* and *Penſylvania* is univerſal liberty as in *Rhode-Iſland*. In *Maryland* and *Virginia* it is *epiſcopacy*, with appropriations of large revenues from tobacco for the eſtabliſhed clergy only. And tho' a very conſiderable part of thoſe two provinces, according to Dr. Douglaſs and others, are presbyterian and other diſſenters, who contribute proportionably to this eccleſiaſtical revenue, yet they are not allowed to ſhare the leaſt part of its appropriation. As to the three ſouthern provinces, their climate not ſuiting european conſtitutions, they will not figure as to numbers for perhaps yet a century or more, untill the preſent race is hardned and get the better of a noxious region. Epiſcopacy however is in effect their eſtabliſhment, or perhaps will be in time: But with this only difference at preſent, that the epiſcopalians in South Carolina have gained of the legiſlature an appropriation of certain duties on leather and ſkins. Excepting their proportion in this, the other proteſtant ſects are not yet obliged to contribute to the ſupport of the epiſcopal clergy in thoſe three provinces.

From this view it appears, that in virtue of the religious eſtabliſhment in the three provinces of Penſylvania, the Jerſeys and Rhode-Iſland, there are no diſſenters, but all enjoy the ſame common immunities; excepting that ſome few Dutch and perhaps other churches in the Jerſies are created bodies corporate by patents obtained from the governors. But the happy policy of eſtabliſhing one ſect without infringing the eſſential rights of others is peculiar to the three New England provinces, where *congregationaliſm* is the eſtabliſhment, * with reſpect to two of which it is ſaid to be confirmed by the royal aſſent. Now tho' our churches and congregations are endowed with parochial immunities, yet all not of our denomination, and particularly the epiſcopalian, are exempted from parochial taxes to

* CONGREGATIONALISTS are not DISSENTERS in New England,

the eſtabliſhed clergy—for what is collected of epiſcopalians in parochial aſſeſſments is paid to the epiſcopal incumbent—a favor which our numerous brethren the diſſenters at home have never gained. Nor is any ſuch favor granted to our brethren the presbyterians in Maryland and Virginia, whoſe religious eſtabliſhment was made under epiſcopal influence.—But where we have power we grant liberty ſo abundantly, that even in thoſe parts of New England where congregationaliſm is the legal eſtabliſhment, other ſects ſcarcely know that they are tolerated diſſenters, ſo happy and mild in our dominion. When by the eſtabliſhment all the members of a community are by law obliged to contribute to the ſupport of the clergy of one ſect, whether in parochial taxes or *appropriated revenues*, all the other ſects ſuffer in their eſſential liberties. When every ſect is free of one another, or proportionably ſhare the public revenues and offices, their eſſential liberties are intire. Congregationaliſm being endowed with parochial powers over its own members only, does not in the leaſt interfere with the eſſential liberties of the other ſects. And further it is to be obſerved, that the peculiar tenets of any religious proteſtant ſect is not made a religious teſt of holding civil or military offices in Penſylvania, the Jerſies and New England.

Hence it appears, that congregationaliſm is friendly, I will not ſay more, ſo, but as friendly as any other ſect to the public liberty civil and religious; and does not in the leaſt interfere with the liberty and eſſential rights of other ſect. And beſides, our peculiar forms do not prevent our diſtinguiſhed loyalty to our ſovereign—for we may boldly ſay his majeſty has not a body of more loyal and well affected ſubjects in his dominions. All the New England ſects are loyal; but the principles of loyalty to the illuſtrious houſe of Hanover are inculcated on the people by the congregational clergy with peculiar ſincerity, faithfulneſs and conſtancy.

Again,

Again, our churches are well calculated for the good of a chriſtian ſtate. There are two ends of churches in a ſtate, *inſtruction in chriſtianity*, and the *public offices of religion*. Both theſe, and eſpecially the former, are as well performed in New England as in any part of the proteſtant world. And perhaps the numerous body of our denomination may be juſtly diſtinguiſhed for the popular acquaintance with the ſacred writings, & knowledge both of the hiſtories and great doctrines of revelation. Our clergy are not expenſive, nor are our people burdened with tenths, nor have we intrigued the eccleſiaſtical appropriation of enormous impoveriſhing revenues. The landed eſtate in England is computed at 20 millions per annum: of which 14 millions per annum were dependent on the clergy at the reformation. In the time of *Louis* XIV. the eccleſiaſtical revenues of France were 26 millions ſterling, when at the ſame time the civil revenue did not exceed 13 millions. The leſs expenſive the clergy, if a people be well inſtructed and the publick offices of religion faithfully and decently performed, the better for a ſtate, becauſe the richer the people: and it is eaſier to raiſe a ſum for public exigencies on an opulent people, than on an opulent hierarchy. Beſides, eccleſiaſtical opulence gives the clergy a weight, which is apt to affect the civil adminiſtration.

It gives me peculiar pleaſure that notwithſtanding their many imperfections, our churches afford ſuch an agreeable review with reſpect to *purity*, *liberty*, and *utility*. For the firſt, we are nearly recovered to the purity of the primitive apoſtolic churches—for the ſecond, we oppreſs no other ſect—for the laſt, the popular knowledge of revelation, the decency and ſolemnity of our public offices of religion witneſs for us. And our imperfections admit amendment on our preſent polity. We have reaſon to bleſs God, that when the church was intirely corrupted in the papacy, he raiſed up and ſpirited the reformation. But to me it appears, that he has reſerved the honor of a moſt purified

reformation

reformation for our churches in New-England. It is truly important that this vine, which God hath planted with a mighty hand in this american wilderneſs, ſhould be cultivated into confirmed maturity. You are very ſenſible, that there is a formal attempt on the chaſtity and order of our churches, which is vigilantly to be guarded againſt, at preſent, till our churches grow into one cemented, large, pure, defenſible body. It is incumbent upon us to watch and guard their infancy with a paternal godlike fidelity. God has betruſted us with a part to act for poſterity and the public; let us not ſupinely deſert it, but act it well, conſecrate and tranſmit the purity of religion to generations yet unborn. It is evident nothing tends more to enervate and moulder down our cauſe, than differences and animoſities: nothing tends to ſtrengthen and form it to defenſible maturity like union and benevolence. If we have any public benevolence, any bowels of compaſſion, any tender affection for pure and undefiled religion—by the tender mercies of Jehovah! by the love of Jeſus!—let us bury and lay aſide our trifling differences, and harmoniouſly unite in carrying on and perfecting the one ſame great and noble work.

2. The ſecond argument for union may be taken from the preſent ſtate of our churches. There is no body of chriſtians on earth in ſuch a rapid increaſe, and in ſo flouriſhing a ſtate, as the congregationaliſts of New-England. The preſent ſtate of our denomination as to numbers, for the year 1760, is nearly this—in Maſſachuſetts are above 300 congregational churches—in Connecticut 170—in New-Hampſhire 43—which, with thoſe in this colony, form a body of about 530 churches. In 1650 there were about 36 churches already founded, ſeveral of which were ſmall beginnings, requiring many years to fill up. In 1696 were but 130 congregational churches in all New-England. And being A. D. 1760 increaſed to 530, the proportion of doubling is once in 30 years. A. D. 1643 there had

arrived

arrived in 298 tranſports, about 4200 planters with their families, making about 21,200 people for all New-England *. Since that time more have gone from us to Europe, than have arrived from thence hither. The preſent inhabitants therefore of New-England, are juſtly to be eſtimated a natural increaſe by the bleſſing of heaven on the firſt 21,000 that arrived by the year 1643.

In new ſetled countries the tranſplanted colonies, by an eſtabliſhed law of nature, in a good climate, do increaſe to a certain *patrial* maturity, when they begin to decline. At the beginning of this increaſe the period of doubling is very ſhort, and the augmentation rapid—afterward the period of doubling is extended till it gradually ceaſes, and is ſucceeded with a diminution, ſlow at firſt, but rapid at laſt. The period of *patrial maturity*, as well as of *patrial doubling* doubtleſs in ſome meaſure correſponds to the nature of the climate:—the former in our climate may have been about 1000 or 1200 years; the latter 20 or 25 years. The period of rapid patrial doubling in 25 years may reach its akme in one third of the term requiſite to the final Akme of increaſe. The ratio of patrial doubling continues equable for 3 or 400 years, when in conſequence of another law of nature, this ratio begins at once to be greatly extended. Poſterity alone can more accurately aſcertain theſe things. If we look into hiſtory we may perhaps be inclined to judge the period of patrial maturity about 800 or 1000 years, perhaps more than leſs. It is probable that the colonies tranſplanted from Shinar into Egypt—and from Egypt afterwards into Greece, came to the maturity of their politeſt ages about this period. The ſame obſervation may hold of the Tyrian colonies at Carthage. Rather more certainly we know that the fugitives from Troy peopled Italy at this period. The few trojan exiles, who were tranſported in ſeven ſmall ſhips, arrived into Italy, according to Livy about 430 years before

* Sion's Saviour in N. E. p. 31.

fore the foundation of Rome. And it is probable the Romans had their akme of natural increaſe before U. C. 650, that is, within about 1100 years after their firſt plantation in Italy. But moſt certainly of all, we know that the 70 ſouls, which ſprang from JACOB's loins, when tranſplanted into Egypt grew and multiplied in about 215 years to 603,550 ſenſible men of 20 years and upwards, excluſive of the levites: which, conſidering the young men under 20 years, may imply above 3 million ſouls, an increaſe on 70 ſouls only in 215 years. It is true, this public cenſus was made above a year after the exodus, but we are given to underſtand that there was no increaſe in the wilderneſs. This is an unparralleled increaſe! the period of doubling being about 14 years.

Joſeph was 17 years old when he was ſold into Egypt. He was 30 at his advancement: 8 years after this Jacob came into Egypt with his family; after which Joſeph lived 72 years and died at the age of 110. Iſrael came out of Egypt 143 years after Joſeph's death and 215 after Jacob's coming into Egypt. Moſes was born 63 or 64 years after Joſeph's death, ſpent 40 years at Pharaoh's court and 40 years in exile in Midian; and at his return muſt have found Iſrael increaſed in 40 years from about 400,000 to about 3 millions. Upon the view of the hoſts of Iſrael after his return from exile "thy fathers "went down into Egypt with three ſcore and ten perſons; "and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the ſtars "of heaven for multitude." All the ſouls that came out of Jacob's loins, excluſive of his ſon's wives, were 70 at his arrival and ſettlement in Egypt. If the period of doubling continued equable during the whole term of 215 years, the numbers of increaſe may be thus exhibited,

Souls

Souls deſcended of Jacob — 70		—at his ſettling in Egypt
140 —	14 years	—period of doubling.
280 —	28	—17. y. Jacob's Death.
560 —	42	
1,120 —	56	
2,240 —	70	—72. Joſeph's Death.
4,480 —	84	
8,960 —	98	
17 920 —	112	
35,840 —	126	—135. Moſes born.
71,680 —	140	
143.360 —	154	
286,720 —	168	—175. Moſes exiled in Midian.
573,440 —	182	
1,146,880 —	196	
2,293,760 —	210	—215. Exodus at about 3 Million.
4,587,520 —	222	

If we aſſume the period of doubling 14 years and 4 months, the 15th revolution would terminate at 215 years; but the number of ſouls at the 15th doubling would be too ſmall for 600,000 enſible men. So that 14 years is more probably the mean term. I ſay the mean term or period; for I ſuppoſe the periods of doubling themſelves varied, being longer at firſt and ſhorter at laſt.* And if we conſider that the enſible men were not reckoned from 16 æt. and upwards, but from 20 æt. the total at the Exodus muſt be above three million of ſouls; which will

 ſhorten

* The rapidity and greatneſs of the Hebrew increaſe in 215 years renders not altogether incredible what is related of the "Iſle of Pines" in an account publiſhed in London, A. D. 1668 which, like many accidental diſcoveries, from incredulity and contempt, paſſed into neglect and oblivion. In this account it was ſaid "that certain "Engliſh perſons—in the days of Q. Elizabeth making a voyage "to the Eaſt-India, were caſt away and wrecked upon the iſland near "the coaſt of Terra Auſtralis Incognita, and all drowned, excepting "*one man and four women*, whereof *one* was a negro. And now "lately, A. D. 1667, a Dutch ſhip driven by foul weather there by "chance, have found their poſterity (ſpeaking good engliſh) to a-"mount to ten or twelve thouſand perſons, as they ſuppoſe." Q. Elizabeth was crowned A. D. 1558, whence the period of this increaſe

ſhorten the mean period of doubling to 13 years. Had this rapid increaſe continued 40 years longer, 20 millions of ſouls might have entered Canaan. Infinite wiſdom however ſaw fit to take occaſion from the ſins of the wilderneſs, to put a ſtop to it, perhaps at the time they had arrived at the akme of rapid doubling: ſo that but about the number of the Exodus entered on the poſſeſſion of the promiſed land—three million of people periſhing in the wilderneſs. A flagrant inſtance this of the public chaſtiſement of the Moſt High!—which, with the fatal effects of the ſubſequent diſſentions among the choſen people of God, ought to influence us to public virtue and union.

Iſrael not increaſing in the wilderneſs for 40 years, about the ſame number entered Canaan that went out of Egypt. About 430 years after the entrance into Canaan, Joab by order of David numbered the people. And tho' the amount of the cenſus which he returned and reported to David was but 1,300,000 ſenſible men, 800,000 for Iſrael and 500,000 for Judah: yet the true amount was for the former 1,100,000, for the latter 470,000. But even in this account the tribes of Benjamin and Levi were not

creaſe could be but, 109 years by A.D. 1667, and probably not ſo much. This implies their period of doubling 13 years, which we have ſeen is poſſible in the Hebrew poſterity. One man and four women may be equal to four families for the baſis of increaſe. The Arabian females are ſaid to have children at 8 Æt. The ratio of increaſe which will augment them, from the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign to A. D. 1667, to 2000 families, will augment them by A. D. 1760, to above 500,000 families, or two millions and an half of ſouls, the poſterity of five perſons in two hundred years. But half, nay one quarter of this number, would be a great diſcovery. There are many reaſons to believe there is a ſouthern continent.

Families	Years
4	
16	13
32	26
64	39
128	52
256	65
512	78
1024	91
2048	104

2000 Families imply 10,000 Souls.

not included. The total of Joab's cenſus of fencible men of 20 æt. and upwards being 1,570,000, * implies 7,850,000 ſouls excluſive of Benjamin and Levi. Tho' the memorable barbarity of the Benjamites coſt them the loſs of 25,100 men, and almoſt the extinction of the tribe; yet we find that in about 60 years after David they had recovered and increaſed to 280,000 fighting men, implying 1,400,000 ſouls for that tribe; which if not reckoned by Joab may augment the above numbers to 9,250,000 ſouls. The males of the tribe of Levi were 22,000 at the exodus, and ſo the whole tribe about 40,000 (the males of 30 æt. were 38,000 in David's time)—which if augmented with the common national increaſe, and added to the preceding numbers, may give 9 millions and an half for the total of ſouls of the Hebrews about the times of David and Solomon. And perhaps they never exceded this. Though their numbers might continue much the ſame till beyond Jehoſaphat's times, and eſpecially during Solomon's reign when the nation was at its ſummit of glory, both for numbers, riches, policy and union; yet it is probable they had reached the akme or height of patrial increaſe even before David. Hence we ſee that they doubled not twice after the exodus; and that the period of doubling was extended from 14 to 2 or 300 years. The ſeven nations of Palæſtine were ſaid to be "greater and mightier" than Iſrael on their arrival thither. They

* In the year 1583, Queen Elizabeth cauſed to be made a review of all the men in England capable of bearing arms, when they were found to amount to 1,172,000 men according to Raleigh. See Hume's Hiſt. of Brit. Vol. I. p. 119. According to Dr. *Brackenbridge*, it ſhould ſeem that the total of inhabitants in England for the middle of the preſent century, does not exceed FIVE MILLIONS AND AN HALF, and thoſe of Scotland and Ireland TWO MILLIONS AND AN HALF. So the total of inhabitants in the iſland of Great Britain and Ireland amount to EIGHT MILLIONS. He eſtimates the total of France at FOURTEEN MILLIONS. Accurate ſearches ſhew that former general eſtimates have been greatly too large.

were ſo numerous and powerful as to ſubjugate Iſrael 40 years, ſo long after their entrance into Canaan as the times of Sampſon. But tho' the Philiſtines might be 3 million at firſt, yet by exile and conqueſt they were ſo diminiſhed, that when "Solomon numbered all the ſtrangers that were "in the land of Iſrael—they were found 153,600" only: which however implies three quarters of a million of ſouls even in his time. Yet theſe with the children of Iſrael to the total amount of 10 million of ſouls were ſubſiſted in affluence upon a territory, according to Dr. *Pococke*, not larger than the three governments of *Maſſachuſetts*, *Connecticut* and *Rhode-Iſland*.

In more things than one, that of exile, our New England churches may reſemble God's antient choſen people. I apprehend God has great things in deſign for this vine which his irreſiſtable arm has planted: and that he purpoſes to make of us a great people and a pure and glorious church. To be ſure he has already wonderfully bleſſed the emigration of our fore-fathers into this wilderneſs, and cauſed it to multiply abundantly. The Spaniſh and French emigrations into America, for a well known reaſon, do not much increaſe upon the firſt ſettlers, perhaps diminiſh:—the eſtimated total of the Spaniards in South America, according to *Don Ullaö*, not exceeding ſome of the britiſh provinces. The Dutch in *Batavia* have, it is ſaid, from ſmall beginnings increaſed to two millions:—unhappy for them and their happily reformed churches, if heaven ſhould take occaſion from their late public perfidy to blaſt their poſterity, and ſet them forth a public example in conjunction with antient Iſrael for our admonition. Happy for us if the admonitions of providence in antient and modern example, ſhould ſecure our attachment and publick obedience to Jehovah

New England has advanced 120 years in rapid increaſe, the term of doubling being 20, or according to Dr.

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FRANKLIN 25 years. * As this is much ſlower than the increaſe of Iſrael, the period of rapid increaſe, as diſtinguiſhed from the ultimate period of patrial increaſe, may be longer in the proportion of 14 to 25, or a ratio formed of theſe numbers. If Iſrael reached the firſt in 215 years, we may reach it in 384; of which, as I ſaid, 120 are already elapſed. Above 160 years of rapid increaſe yet

* This is verified by reference to the cenſus for the colony of Rhode-Iſland, by the King's order in 1730 and 1755.

Cenſus for 1730 - -		15,302	Whites.
Ditto for 1755 -	35,939		
Deduct for 5 Towns annexed ſince 1730	4,910	31,029	Ditto.
	31,029	15,727	Increaſe in 25 Years.

According to the reverend and ingenious Mr *Callender* (Hiſt. Diſcourſe p. 9) "there were fewer than 200 families in the whole colony, "about the year 1658.

The increaſe of the maritime towns is not equal to that of the inland ones. Tho' the period of doubling for the whole colony is 25 years, now that the maritime towns make ſo great a proportion of the inhabitants, yet the period is different for different parts of the colony. While on the ſea-coaſt it is above 25 years, yet within land it is 20 and 15. The five towns of Glouceſter, Situate, Coventry, Weſt-Greenwich and Exeter were 5033 A. D. 1748, and 6986, A. D. 1755, which implies a period of doubling 15 years only. And the two inland counties of Providence and Kent, double on a mean in 20 years. And this I believe is the full period for the inland towns of New England in general; which might be aſcertained by calculations on their cenſus in 1730 and 1755. The Ratio of increaſe for different parts of this colony thus appears

	A.D.1730.	A.D.1755.	Per. doubling.
Iſland of Rhode Iſland,	4486	7372	35 years
Portſmouth alone,	643	1172	28 years
C°. King's-County,	4460	9250	22 years
C°. Kent,	2177	5090	20 years
C°. Providence,	3843	9820	18 years
	10,480	24,160	20 years

Hence the mean period of doubling is 20 years for that part of the Colony, which lies on the weſt ſide of the Narraganſett-Bay.

yet remain, by which time thro' the bleſſing of heaven we may become many Millions. After this we may continue to increaſe in extended periods of doubling for 7 or 800 years, till we ſhall have reached the Summit of the patrial increaſe in 11 or 1200 years from the firſt ſettlement of America: which, as it may have then advanced us into the millennial times, preceding examples of the riſe and decline of empire may not be further applicable. And here I cannot but remark that the maxim holds good of communities as of individuals "quo ſemel eſt imbuta recens ſervabit odorem—teſta diu"—that they receive their turn, their genius, their manners, their political conſtitution, very much from their infant education, the diſcipline and maxims infuſed in the infancy of the ſtate: which ought therefore to be carefully attended to. This is eſpecially true of public bodies of Mankind that grow up faſt and in ſuch quick ſucceſſions, as not eaſily to permit the ingrafting of capitally new cuſtoms. The Greeks, Carthaginians and Romans retained the manners of Egypt, Tyre and Troy: and Iſrael retained the religion and polity which they received in Egypt and the wilderneſs. But to return.

In order to form an idea of the future growth of New England, it will be neceſſary to take a retroſpect on the paſt. For the firſt 15 years from A D 1628 to 1643—"the number of ſhips that tranſported paſſengers in this ſpace of time is computed at 298—"Men, women and children paſſing over this wide ocean as near as at preſent can be gathered, is alſo ſuppoſed to be 21,200 or thereabouts."* From thence to the beginning of the preſent century, there came not ſo many from Europe as returned. Indeed at the reſtoration, on the ejection of 2000 miniſters at the memorable black Bartholomew A. D. 1662, ſome few families with 14 miniſters repaired hither; not enough however

* Wonder-working Providence of Sion's Savior in N. E. p. 31. London Edit. A. D. 1658.

however to balance the returns from hence. It was computed in the year 1670 that of 94 miniſters which came over, 31 were then living, 36 had died in the country, and 27 returned to europe. And in this term went back many others, beſides miniſters. The principal foreign augmentation ſince was by a body of proteſtants from the north of Ireland about A D 1730 and onwards. This might be an acceſſion of ſo few Families. * It is to be remembered that part of the firſt planters ſettled on Long Iſland, and that conſiderable numbers ſince 1731 have removed out of New England to the confines of New York: a number of families alſo removed into New Jerſey about A D 1695. So that on the whole the amount of the public cenſus A D 1755, taken by order from the lords commiſſioners for trade and plantations, may be eſtimated not to excede the natural increaſe of the original planters in the reign of Charles the firſt.

Dr. Cotton Mather ſays, that A D 1696, in all New England were 100,000 Souls. It is ſaid there were A D 1691 about 16,000 militia which may imply 100,000; according to the implication of a like account by governor *Shute*, who A D 1722 reported to the board of trade, that in the province of the Maſſachuſetts were 94,000 people, whereof 15,000 were in the training liſt. The alarum liſt, containing the fencible men, may be eſtimated at a third more. A. D. 1708, Mr. Thomas Brattle eſtimated for all New-England 100 or 120,000 ſouls, and 20 or 25,000 fighting men. In 1735 the provincial valuation for Maſſachuſetts was 35,427 polls, whites of 16 æt. and upwards. In 1742 the valuation of whites was 41,000 polls. The ſame year the rateable polls of the province of New-Hampſhire were 6000. In the cenſus of 1755, the colony of Connecticut amounted to 133,000 ſouls,

* Dr. FRANKLIN ſays, "in fact there has not gone from Britain to our colonies theſe 20 years paſt to ſettle there, ſo many as 10 families a year."

ſouls, whites. In the cenſus of 1730, the cenſus of the colony of Rhode-Iſland and Providence plantations amounted to 15,302 whites. The cenſus within the ſame limits in 1755 amounted to 31,029; and for the whole colony, incluſive of the annexed towns, 35,939 ſouls whites, the militia being about a ſeventh part. Not having the cenſus of 1755 for Maſſachuſetts and New-Hampſhire, I can only eſtimate them. I have been told that Maſſachuſetts then amounted to between 234 and 240,000. The provincial numbers A. D. 1755 may have been nearly thus;

Maſſachuſetts	234,000	
Connecticut	133,000	
Rhode-Iſland	35,939	
New-Hampſhire	34,000	
	436,939	Souls.
Increaſe in 5 Years	64,970	
Total of Souls in New-England	501,909	A. D. 1760.

The omiſſion in the cenſus of 1755 of thoſe at ſea and others, and the increaſe on thoſe omiſſions will more than balance the extraordinary loſs of the war the laſt five years. * We ſhall not be miſtaken then if we aſſume the number of inhabitants at half a million in the year 1760. We now commence an increaſe of 14,000 a year, which in 25 years will be augmented to 28,000 a year: and if providence continues our increaſe for 50 years, we ſhall have arrived to an annual increaſe of about 56,000.

It will be more difficult to eſtimate the proportion of the ſects. Let it ſuffice that I eſtimate all but the congregationaliſts to their full amount. There may be about 70 ſouls of Jews in all New-England, and as many *Moravians*.

From

* At the end of the campaign 1760, it was computed that about 21,000 had periſhed in the war on this continent, from General *Braddock*'s defeat in 1755 to 1760 incluſive. Of which perhaps 7000 were New England provincials.

From the moſt accurate account that I can collect the *epiſcopalians* do not exceed 2100 families, or 12,600 ſouls, in all New-England. There are 27 miſſions, incluſive of two itinerancies: the 27 miſſionaries, with three other miniſters, officiate in 47 churches and places of divine ſervice. Six or ſeven of theſe congregations are large; and 30 that are not equal to half of a common presbyterian congregation a-piece: and ſeveral that do not excede 15 and 20 families each. Not exceding in the whole 30 common presbyterian congregations, which I eſtimate at 80 and 100 families, and yet at a mean they contain 140 families each. Though we have ſome under 50 and 60, yet we have many above 200 to 250, and ſome above 300. From ſeveral eſtimates procured from the *friends*, I take their denomination to be about 16,000 ſouls in the four governments: though I am aſſured by a very ingenious and obſervant friend that this eſtimate is too large. From like eſtimates procured of the baptiſts I take their denomination to be about 22,000 ſouls in the four governments. Theſe eſtimates cannot be ſuppoſed perfectly accurate, but I believe they are nearly the truth. Beſides theſe are to be reckoned about 10 000 reducible to no claſs. The total amount of 60,000 ſubducted from half a million, the preſent total of inhabitants in New England, leaves 440,000 ſouls for the denomination of *con-*

 gregationaliſts,

* Of 175 whites in the town of Newport that died A. D. 1760, 41 were Infants of the year, and incluſive of theſe 51 under 2 years old. The total of whites in town A. D. 1755, was 5519, which might be increaſed to about 6000 at preſent. The maritime do not increaſe ſo faſt as the iſland towns. The total of deaths A. D. 1760, if proportionate through New England, was about 14 500, added to 13 500 the increaſe of the year, gives 28,000 the number of children born in New England in the year 1760: of which about 3000 died within the year, and 25 000 ſurvived. But I am inclined to believe the proportion of deaths to be leſs in the country, though probably there were 25,000 children at leaſt born in the year. *Nineveh* contained 120,000 Infants.

gregationaliſts. This being nearly the true ſtate of the ſects as to numbers for the year 1760, let us ſee what may be their reſpective increaſe in a century from this time, ſuppoſing them to double once in 25 years only.

Epiſcopalians.	Friends.	Baptiſts.	Congregationaliſts.	A.D.
12,600	16,000	22,000	440,000 ——	1760
23,200	32,000	44,000	880,000 ——	1785
46,400	64,000	88,000	1,760,000 ——	1810
92,800	128,000	176,000	3,520,000 ——	1835
185,600	256,000	352,000	7 MILLIONS—	1860

Hence it appears that without conſidering the augmentation of future acceſſions from Europe, each of the four principal ſects in New England may greatly increaſe into large and reſpectable bodies, even with the moſt ſanguine allowances for proſeliting. The natural increaſe on the preſent ſtock will in half a century give 46,400 for the epiſcopalians, 64,000 for the friends, 88,000 for the baptiſts, and one million and three quarters for the congregationaliſts. And in a century 185,600 for the firſt, 256000 for the ſecond, 352000 for the third, and ſeven millions for the laſt. I ſhall not enter into the variations which may ariſe on theſe numbers in this period from proſeliting and ſhifting communions, though we have ſufficient data to form pretty certain anticipations on this head.

The difficulty of breaking the anceſtorial religion, unleſs the public enthuſiaſm be excited, appears not only from the ſmall impreſſion made on the ſects here, where the amount of changes may not perhaps excede 5000 among all the ſects: but alſo from the ſmall impreſſions made on the ſects in Germany and other parts of the proteſtant world with regard to their general forms—and particularly on the Iriſh catholics, when the reſult of the labors of a much longer period is ſaid not to have gained 200,000 proteſtants, excepting the north of Ireland Scots preſbyterians.

byterians. The authors of the ſyſtem of geography ſay, "it is computed that about 8 parts in 10 are papiſts, and that "the diſſenters are double the memebers of the eſtabliſhment." It is to be hoped that the next capital change will be to a ſtill greater purity both in doctrine and worſhip. Our final dependence for the ſecurity and protection of truth is in the irreſiſtable dominion of Jeſus Chriſt, who will eventually ſubdue all things to himſelf.

At preſent the congregationaliſts have about 515 churches already gathered, which double in leſs than 30 years. * So that 60 years hence we may conſiſt of 2000 churches; a remarkable increaſe, which ſome of the preſent generation may live to ſee. The aged miniſters now living, have in their day ſeen 130 churches increaſe to 530. In a century from this time we may have 5000 churches, even with allowances for emigrations to new provinces. But in order to this the love of liberty, and a zeal for pure and undefiled religion muſt be diffuſed and propagated with unremitted fidelity and vigilance. Should our inteſtine diſſentions unhinge the minds of the riſing generations, and diſengage or render them indifferent to the cauſe, it might be attended with unhappy conſequences. Union and diffuſive harmony are truly important, during this infancy of the churches, and this period of rapid increaſe. The error of Balaam in the ſnare he laid for Iſrael, effectually wrought a confuſion, from which omnipotence alone could recover them. Let us not be caught by any ſimilar error. If we adhere to our principles, even the undefiled, the uncorrupted principles of revelation, with the utmoſt charity and benevolence to others, and without encroaching upon, or intefering with, the peculiarities of our proteſtant brethren of the other ſects, if we are and continue united in faith and fellowſhip—providence is advancing us in a ſwift progreſs to figure and defenſible maturity. The preſent increaſing ſtate

* According to Dr. Douglaſs the Number of our Churches A. D. 1759, was 407. Summary Hiſt. V. I. 542.

of our churches, and the dependence of their future glory on harmonious union in their increaſing infancy, appear to me a very powerful recommendation to walk together by the ſame rules, in love and harmony, ſo far as we have attained, and attentively to *mind the ſame thing;* that is, ourſelves to reſpect, and to teach our children to mind the ſame great intereſt of the ſame common cauſe—never to deſert it, but faithfully purſue it: that the public ſpirit be animated, guided and governed by the *ſame* public principles which are our common intereſt. It ought particularly to be inculcated upon our friends going from us to the ſettlement of new towns or provinces, to carry religion with them, to *ſettle early in church order, and furniſh themſelves with a miniſtry of the word and ordinances, for the benefit of themſelves and their children.* Great encouragement ſhould be given to our colleges and nurſeries of literature, which grow more and more important every day. We ſhould often relate to our poſterity the hiſtory of the wonderful providences of God in the ſettlement of this country; and remark the growth of our churches, and engage them by all the honorable motives of chriſtianity to ſteadfaſtneſs in the faith once delivered to the ſaints, and in the liberty wherewith the goſpel has made us free. Let our children be often taught to read the ſixth, ſeventh, eighth, and ninth verſes of the twenty-ſixth chapter of Deuteronomy with parallel application to the hiſtory of our anceſtors. Let the great errand into America never be forgotten.* Let them be made well acquainted among other

*The plantation of Plymouth colony conſiſted of 300 ſouls A. D. 1629; when the principal draught of our fathers from the mother country commenced the ſettlement of the Maſſachuſetts. And in the 10 following years there were 21 churches gathered. About 16 churches planted by the time of the firſt ſynod 1637, at which were preſent 25 miniſters. I have obſerved that there were arrived by A. D. 1643 about 2000 planters, beſides 200 gentlemen of fortune, merchants and miniſters: which have been judged to imply 21,200 ſouls. The firſt Plymouth ſettlement, A. D. 1620, conſiſted of 41 planters and but 101 ſouls, of which there were only 18 wives

other parts of ſacred hiſtory, with the hiſtory of the Hebrew nation; in which they will ſee examples of public reward

18 wives: and I ſuppoſe in all the future acceſſions, there was a large proportion of adventurers ſingle men without families. The Ld. Treaſurer's order, April 16, 1629. was for 60 adult females, 26 children and 300 men. A. D. 1644 the militia of the Maſſachuſetts conſiſted of 26 bands, or perhaps 2600 ſoldiers, which if but a ſeventh part, imply but about 16 000 ſouls: but probably the militia bore a greater proportion, if the males exceded the females. The reſtoration of the ballance of the ſexes might require that the firſt 15 or 20 years increaſe, ſhould conſiſt chiefly of female children. From ſeveral computations of this nature I have been inclined to believe, that the firſt 4000 planters did not imply above 15,000 ſouls to have arrived by A. D. 1643; which were cantoned into 34 churches by A. D 1645, increaſed to about 40 churches by A. D. 1650—when they contained 7750 communicants. Perhaps there may now be 60 or 70 thouſand communicants. There were 130 churches A. D. 1696, of which 35 in Connecticut: there are A. D. 1760. 530 churches, of which 170 in Connecticut. Hence the period of doubling for the churches is 30 years at fartheſt. In 115 years we have increaſed 500 churches upon 34—This is the LORD's doings, and it is marvellous in our eyes! Perhaps the multiplication of the primitive churches did not excede this in the firſt 130 years from the crucifixion. And it is to be remembered, that of the firſt planters two churches are not reckoned, which were ſettled on *Long-Iſland*. The numbers of the planters might be accurately aſcertained by having recourſe to the records of the firſt 30 or 40 towns. I have obſerved, that as we are above 500 churches at preſent, ſo we may by the bleſſing of heaven become above 1000 in 30, and 2000 in 60 years. The renowned church of Scotland conſiſts of 938 churches—thoſe of the Dutch and Walloon, A. D. 1560. conſiſted of 2190 churches: to either of which we may be equal in 60 or 70 years.

And while we are anticipating the Growth and Multiplication of our churches in New England—we may with pleaſure extend the Proſpect to our brethren the presbyterian churches in the other provinces. The wiſe and happy junction of the two ſynods of *Philadelphia* and New-York, A. D. 1758. formed a coalition of above 100 Paſtors with their churches under the rapid augmentation of the like natural increaſe with ours. In the province of Pennſylvania, incluſive of the three Delaware counties, are 66 congregations, of which 41 are deſtitute of Paſtors. Our brethren are ſtill more numerous in proportion in the province of New-Jerſey, and I think alſo in that of

New-York.

reward and public chaſtiſement of providence in a very ſtriking light. From the antient example let our churches be warned, very carefully to avoid the two capital errors which proved the ruin of the Hebrew repu'lic, and which will never fail eventually to ſubvert the beſt conſtituted empire—I mean CORRUPTION in RELIGION and the public VIRTUE; & DISUNIONS. Theſe two things operated with full ſtrength among God's antient peo le, on the revolt of Jeroboam and introduction of idolatry, upon which in a very little time there were not found above 7 or 8000 men out of above a million who had *not bowed the knee to baal.* The pure religion becoming thus corrupted, Iſrael was ripe for that extirpation, which was effected upon their calling in the foreign aid of Damaſcus and Aſſyria. See this in 2 Kings 17. And before this the immediate effect of national diſſention was the loſs of half

New-York. And there is a very conſiderable body of them in the frontiers of Maryland and Virginia, where they have already a preſbytery formed. Alſo in New-York and Jerſey are two cætus of our proteſtant brethren the *Dutch reformed*, conſiſting of 20 miniſters: alſo two churches of French proteſtants; and 3 congregational churches. All theſe are peculiarly ſiſter churches, with whom we have an intire harmony and fellowſhip. Dr. Douglaſs ſays, "the three frontier counties in Virginia of *Frederic. Auguſta* and *Lunenburg*, are prodigiouſly large, and generally ſettled by north of Ireland Scots preſbyterians, as is alſo *Amelia* and *Albemarle* counties." Tho' there are many vacant churches, which the colleges are ſupplying a pace, yet the *eight* preſbyteries, at the union of the ſynods in May 1758 conſiſted of 100 miniſters. There have been ſome tranſpoſitions ſince; but then they were nearly thus:

Preſbyteries.		Miniſters.
Hanover	—	14
Donnegall	—	11
Lewiſtown	—	6
New-Caſtle	—	11
Philadelphia	—	12
New-Brunſwick	—	11
New-York	—	22
Suſſolk	—	13
		100

half a million of men, being near half the kingdom of Iſrael which fell in one day, the greateſt battle that hiſtory records. Even Judah forſook the *law of the Lord;* and within five years after the death of Solomon, the corruption he introduced in complaiſance to foreign wives, had overſpread the empire—ſo fatal is the ill example of princes. Judah alſo "*built them high places and images, and groves, on every high hill and under every green tree:*" on which Shiſhak, with the Egyptian and Ethiopian army, penetrated even to Jeruſalem, and carried off the treaſures of the temple and the king's houſe, the opulence amaſſed by Solomon. What proſperity attended God's people when they turned to the Lord and united in his ways? The whole treatment of divine providence towards that people from Moſes to this day, has been exactly according to the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy. And excepting in one thing, there may be an analogy between the divine treatment of this and all other ſtates, eſpecially his conduct towards that kingdom wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs. We may then reap great advantage in conſulting and duly applying that hiſtory, which may be in ſome meaſure typical of our own. In a word, we have in the ſacred and common hiſtories of providence aſſiſtance to become aſſured in what point of view the PUBLICK VIRTUE and UNDEFILED RELIGION appear to the ſovereign mind. If we conform ourſelves to theſe notices and ſupernal aſſurances, we may depend with abſolute certainty on the ſmiles and defence of Jeſus our omnipotent patron.

I have obſerved that our churches, in a diſtinguiſhed ſenſe from almoſt all the proteſtant world, are founded on the bible. Our worthy and venerable anceſtors (be their memories dear to poſterity) did not like other proteſtant patrons, form a ſyſtem of what they thought and judged to be the true ſenſe of revelation, and eſtabliſh this for the truth:—no—it was eno' for them that the bible was the inſpired rule, and this they made the only rule. And

hence,

hence, if on examination we ſhould find any of the received doctrines or uſages among the churches diſſonant to the ſacred oracles,—if we only *judge* ſo—if this on deliberation be our opinion—we may freely enjoy and profeſs our judgments, and oppoſe ſuch doctrines or cuſtoms by alledging from the SCRIPTURES ONLY; without appealing to *human teſts of divine* truth, or encountering the civil & eccleſiaſtical hoſtilities with which they have been too generally enforced. And as our churches were thus planted in very great purity, ſo we ſee they are in a very flouriſhing ſtate conſidering their infancy. The computations with reſpect to their future growth depend, by the leave of providence, in ſome meaſure, on the ſuppoſition that we have room to extend our ſettlements. Agriculture and the rural life are peculiarly friendly to increaſe. Ten thouſand families (not of an old, but even of a new race, which makes a great difference) with means of affluent ſubſiſtence, dwelling together in a populous herd, kept from vices but employed in handycraft induſtry; will by no means equal the increaſe, which the ſame number of families would afford if turned forth and diſperſed in the wide world and employed in agriculture in a new climate: there is a difference from the employments, but the chief difference is from change of climate, diſſipation and the rural air. Farmers find it neceſſary to change their ſeed-corn, and ſhift their herds and flocks. Hillocks of corn planted near together yield not half the increaſe, as when planted at proper diſtances on the ſame ground. The preſent bounds of New England (the greater part of which is yet a wilderneſs) permit an increaſe of ſeven millions. If providence ſhould complete the reduction of Canada and an honorable peace annex it to the britiſh crown, we may extend our ſettlements into new provinces, or to the weſtern part of thoſe provinces which by the charters croſs the continent to the pacific ocean. With pleaſure we anticipate the rapid ſettlement of new towns and pro-

vinces

vinces around us, and filling them up with millions of inhabitants. * We tranſport ourſelves to the diſtance of

100 years

* Table of increaſe upon half a million inhabitants in the four New England governments for the preſent period of doubling. By inſpecting which may be ſeen the number of inhabitants in New England for each year.

A. D.	A. D.	A. D.	A. D.
1760—500,000	1767—607,090	1774—737,135	1781—895,025
1761—514,050	1768—624,170	1775—757,857	1782—920,185
1762—528,510	1769—641,710	1776—779,165	1783—946,060
1763—543,370	1770—659,760	1777—801,070	1784—972,655
1764—558,650	1771—678,305	1778—823,590	1785-1,000,000
1765—574,350	1772—697,370	1779—846,745	1810-2,000,000
1766—590,500	1773—716,971	1780—870,550	1835-4,000,000

A draught of 4000 families from the beginning of this period for emigration and the ſettlement of new provinces, will put off the increaſe to a million but three years. About 2075 ſouls removed from hence to Nova Scotia in the year 1760: 4000 families will ſettle 80 townſhips with 50 families a piece, which is enough. There may probably remove into New Hampſhire and out of New England in 50 years time 8 or 9000 families, eno' to ſettle 160 townſhips, or about double the number of new townſhips that have been ſettled the laſt 50 years. This involving their increaſe may afford 60 or 70,000 ſouls—which number at the end of the period will be replaced in leſs than two years increaſe. The main body of the people may tarry behind, eſpecially as the greateſt part of our preſent poſſeſſions are uncultivated. And only the provinces of Maſſachuſetts, Connecticut and Rhode-Iſland will admit an increaſe to 6 or 8 millions. The athenian lacedemonian and other territories of Greece were not much affected with the colonization of Jonia and the aſiatic coaſts. Though there was an extended inland territory in the leſſer Aſia, the love of their country retained the main body in Greece, where they accumulated to prodigious numbers. Our preſent territory bids fair for the place of accumulated population for the firſt ages. One thing which in 20 or 30 years time will be found to give a ſenſible ſhock to New England emigrations, will be the quitrents on new provinces. Germans have been accuſtomed to them, but we have not. Free and abſolute tenure of *land* and unburdened property, as well as *liberty in religion*, are neceſſary to tempt us. The new townſhips after 15 or 20 years ſettlement are ſcarce able to bear a ſmall part in the provincial taxes, beſides the ſupport of the miniſtry,

building

100 years forward, look over this wide ſpread wilderneſs, ſee it bloſſom like the roſe, and behold it planted with churches

building meeting houſes, &c. They would ſcarcely be able to bear a quitrent over and above this in many years. A townſhip 6 miles ſquare is charged with annual rent of £. 23 ſterling. A province of 100 miles ſquare admitting 280 ſuch townſhips will be ſettled with 14 000 famalies, implying 80 000 ſouls. The quitrent on this province would be £. 6440 ſterling at 20*s.* a thouſand acres, or £ 23 a townſhip. The annual public charges of Connecticut before the war are ſaid to have been "£ 4000 to £. 5000 currency, or £ 500 ſterling only, when they were above 100 000 ſouls, and were poſſeſſed of old and well cultivated plantations. It is for the intereſt of the crown, of the britiſh merchants and manufacturers that the common people be rich, towards the greater conſumption of merchandize, as well as enlivening induſtry. The quitrent, tho' a ſeeming triſle, will at leaſt procraſtinate the fruit of colonization, and for a long time be an inſupportable burden—which will be felt not only by the planters, but as immediately in commerce. For the circulation of that caſh which pays this ſame trifling quitrent will abſorb the moſt that the farmer will be able to ſpare for ſuperfluities for a long time. A reciprocation of intereſt as well as affection to an exiled and long diſpiſed offspring, has doubtleſs engaged the mother country in our defence. The importations from thence to the continental provinces only, are already arrived to two millions ſterling per annum; this is as much as the preſent numbers will conſume. This importation may increaſe with the inhabitants, if effectual encouragment be given to the fiſhery, to the foreign trade, and the ſeveral provincial ſtaples in which remittances can be made. From 1744 to 1754 the importation doubled: from 1748 to 1758 it more than doubled. But if inſtead of 10 years we ſuppoſe it next to double only in 25 years, or with the natural increaſe of the people, the amount will be 34 millions ſterling for the firſt period, and proportionably greater for the next. The profits of which to the britiſh merchants and manufacturers, that is to ſay, to the mother country, will ſoon repay to her the expences of the American war, even if eſtimated at Four Millions per annum. Burdens on agriculture or the american commerce will unavoidably affect the national intereſt, and more than ballance the trifling revenue to the crown from quitrents on a few provinces, eſpecially if we conſider that a greater extent of territory would be ſettled under a *free* tenure than under an embarraſſed one. The experiment in New England, eſpecially

churches and temples conſecrate to the *pure worſhip* of the moſt High—when our preſent plain edifices for public worſhip ſhall be ſucceeded with a nobler ſpecies of building: not indeed with temples whoſe colonades are deckt with the gilt buſts of angels winged; but temples adorned with all the decent ornaments of the moſt ſublime and auguſt architecture—when divinely reſplendent truth ſhall triumph, and our brethren of the congregational communion may form a body of SEVEN MILLIONS! A glorious and reſpectable body this, for TRUTH and LIBERTY! Well might our fathers die with pleaſure, and ſacrifice their lives with joy to lay the foundation of ſuch a name, of ſuch a peculiar people whoſe numbers ſo ſoon increaſe like the ſand of the ſea, or the ſtars of heaven, and what is more, whoſe GOD is the LORD.

Thus I have conſidered the ſecond argument for union taken from the ſtate and circumſtances of the churches. I might have enlarged upon the unhappy conſequences of contentions and diſunion, by ſhewing more particularly how they muſt, or might terminate in the utter ſubverſion of the congregational intereſt; which might ſhew in another ſtrong light the wiſdom of coalition and harmony. To ſum up this argument—if we love the cauſe; if it gives us pleaſure to be embarked in a cauſe which has Jeſus Chriſt for its head and omnipotent patron, and which under him we can foreſee is riſing into diſtinction; ought we not with ſincere affection to unite and harmonize, ſince this union is the baſis of its riſing into reſpectable figure?

3. And laſtly. I juſt add a laſt reaſon for union, which more immediately affects every one in his individual capa-

eſpecially when compared with ſeveral other provinces, under proper diſtinctions, appears to be a good precedent. Plantation may be made with encouragements but cannot ſucceſsfully be forced. *Free polity, free religion, free property*, and *matrimony*, will ſoon populate a fertile country in a good climate. Theſe have been the baſis of our increaſe.

city, that it will afford a field for the exerciſe of angelic benevolence and complacency. We can look upon the cauſe, upon the ſtate of the churches, with a complacency, which cannot be felt in ſurveying inteſtine confuſion. How good & pleaſanta thing is it for brethren to dwell together in unity. Living in peace and harmony tends irreſiſtably to humanize and ſoften the mind to the moſt generous and god-like feelings—delights unknown to ſectarian contention or inteſtine variance. It is a very happy circumſtance to be ſituated among a friendly ſocial people, we are inſenſibly caught of the benevolence which union and peace diffuſes. The public love and harmony will enable us with ſerenity and more ſacred ſatisfaction to celebrate the offices of piety and devotion. Our religious addreſſes and joyful homage undiſturbed, unpolluted with the reluctant feelings of variance, ſhall aſcend as incenſe holy and acceptable to the Moſt High. And in common life, inſtead of broken friendſhips, and family alienations, we ſhould become united brethren in the higheſt ſenſe, harmoniouſly travelling along together, and ſweetning the trials of life with the animating complacency of ſocial virtue. Religious conteſts are apt to ſour the temper, which is greatly unhappy in a ſtate preparatory to the communion of angels and glorious beings above. The complacency and love for virtuous minds, like all other moral affections are formed, at leaſt ſtrengthened by previous diſcipline. If we have lived in ſerenity and aſſociated with the good here, we ſhall have acquired the principle of ſpiritual delight in good beings, which qualifies the ſoul to be gathered unto ſeraphs, and to be aſſociated with the purified and refined ſpirits of the upper world. We have unavoidable afflictions eno' without coining new ones. It is greatly deſirable, towards our own felicity, to ſee the churches in peace, to dwell together in love.

Our churches afford a moſt agreeable review. We have lived to "*ſee the ſinking church ariſe.*"* We may caſt our eyes around us in a wide extended and ſtill extending

* Watts.

tending proſpect, and feaſt them with beautiful cluſters of churches on this flouriſhing vine which God almighty hath planted. Let us accuſtom ourſelves to take an annual view, and carefully attend to the public exigencies of the churches in the progreſs of increaſe or decline. Let us often tell theſe things to our children, that with their own eyes they may ſee and admire the wonder-working providence of God. That when they are convinced from an inſpection of the ways of God, that the cauſe they are embarked in flouriſhes and is ſecure, and appears evidently emerging ſuperior to all oppoſition, they may give glory to God and take courage, never deſert the cauſe, but adhere firm and unmoved. I am in no doubt, as I have before ſaid, but that the conſtitution and general form of our churches is very nearly apoſtolical. And tho' there are imperfections remaining—yet they are much more eaſily amended than in any other proteſtant church, as amendments would not be encountered with the like oppoſition of authorities and unwieldy temporalities. If we oppreſs any, it is ourſelves only; our churches, and the ſecular power too much at their command, formerly adopted thoſe oppreſſive meaſures, which we always recollect with regret, and diſapprobation *. But even the lower ſecular oppreſſions of other ſects have long ſince been at an end. And as by our principles we are not led to perſecute others, ſo let us entertain a manly charity for our proteſtant brethren of all denominations, rejoicing that they are to a very great degree reformed: and as we believe they reſpectively judge themſelves, each more than others reformed to the ſcripture rule; ſo *our* extenſive charity and comprehenſive benevolence, is no ways inconſiſtent with our given the preference to *congregationaliſm*. We rejoice that men may become good and holy in all communions:—it will be admitted that in different communions there may be different advantages for virtue and piety; and though we think

* Such were the meaſures of 1637, 1656, 1692.

think that our churches have the preference in this, as well as in being reſembled to primitive ſcripture model as to the ordinances and forms of worſhip—yet we doubt not the pious dying from every communion will be received to glory. We are not ſo bigotted as to think that the tender mercies of the Lord are limited to us, and that none can be ſaved out of our churches. We rejoice to ſee men of virtue and true goodneſs; and it gives us pleaſure to view thoſe perſons as ornaments of the communions to which they belong, though different from ours. Inſtead of wiſhing the extirpation of any ſect, we wiſh them all well and to abound in the knowledge and practice of chriſtianity, and to ſubſiſt on truth and honor. We ſtand firm and faſt to the conſtitution of liberty in our churches —and as we do not oppreſs others, ſo we hope not to be oppreſſed by others. On the footing of equality and univerſal liberty we are friends to all, but ſubmit not to be ſubordinate to any. Having ſecured and fortified our own cauſe, we may ſit down full of a joyful ſelf-complacency, and look around on our chriſtian brethren of the other ſects, not with a view of ſowing the ſeeds of diſcord, not to avail ourſelves of their differences, leaſt of all to perſecute and oppreſs them; but to exerciſe good-will and ſincere chriſtian love to them, to let off the emanations of benevolence towards all that fear God and work righteouſneſs.

We ſee my brethren, the arguments are ſtrong for the congregational union in every point of view. There are ſome peculiar reaſons why the congregational brethren and churches in this colony ſhould be united. Our cauſe is one, and a cauſe not in decline, not in diſrepute, but in honor and a moſt flouriſhing proſperity. Let us be cemented together by forbearance, fellowſhip, union. Let us, my reverend FATHERS in the miniſtry give faithful attention to the paſtoral labors, and feed the flock of God, the churches over which the holy Ghoſt hath *made us overſeers*

ſeers. Let us teach for doctrines not the inſtitutes of men, but the pure word of God, that our congregations may grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. It will be our wiſdom to be united ourſelves, and to that end to avoid every thing by which we may unneceſſarily offend one another. Paſtoral alienations are too often accompanied with alienations among the churches. Our paſtoral *conventions* * tend to harmony, and ſhew that we are agreed in the principal matters, and willing to walk together. Let the ſpirit of harmony extend to our churches and congregations, among whom let us be careful to cultivate the principles of harmony and good will to all: that our denomination may be diſtinguiſhed by an *unbigotted, generous* and *diffuſive charity to others.* Let us animate them with annual accounts of the ſtate of the churches, and with this view let us keep our eyes on the public ſtate. We ſhall thus act the part aſſigned us by providence under the general dominion of the mediator. We ſhould account ourſelves happy in being charged with the miniſtry of reconciliation under the prince of peace. Let us make full proof of our miniſtry:—be the glory of God in the reconciliation of men the great object of our attention. Let our perſonal ſanctity and public utility be animated by conſidering that the more we have been inured in cultivating piety and love among men, the better ſhall we be prepared to join the extenſive plans of order and happineſs on high. And having in this manner been long employed in doing good, and become uſeful in promoting peace and virtue on earth; we may not only reflect on our paſt lives with ſerenity and triumph, but adopt with aſſurant hope and confidence thoſe divine promiſes made from the great Lord of the univerſe the head of the church, in which our future reward is repreſented under the idea of receiving a kingdom, being appointed to a heavenly miniſtration, being inveſted with a larger ſphere of

* Firſt formed in this Colony Auguſt 25, 1756.

of action and power, and honored with more talents, more opportunities of doing good; in a word, of being aſſigned to affairs of more extended benevolence. Be our fidelity then inſpired by the realizing anticipation of the future honors, when "they that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the bright-"neſs of the firmament, and they that TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS, as the ſtars forever and ever."

A M E N.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX,

Containing a LIST of the

NEW-ENGLAND CHURCHES, A. D. 1760.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN

MASSACHUSETTS	306
CONNECTICUT	170
NEW-HAMPSHIRE	43
RHODE-ISLAND	11
	530

A LIST of the Miniſters, Churches and religious Aſſemblies, eſpecially of the four Denominations of *Congregationaliſts*, *Baptiſts*, *Friends*, and *Epiſcopalians*, as they lie interſperſed in the four New-England Governments, taken for the Beginning of the Year 1760.—

In ſome few of theſe Congregations the Churches are not yet formed or gathered. I have endeavored to make the Catalogue as accurate and perfect as I could. Some Churches may have been omitted—and there may be ſome Tranſpoſitions. Any Miſtakes of this Nature will be forgiven by a candid Mind. It may ſuffice that I have inſerted all that have come to my Knowledge: and that the Number of the congregational Churches are not augmented beyond the Truth.

E. *Epiſcopalian.* B. *Baptiſt.* P. *Presbyterians, according to the Church of Scotland. The numeral Figures denote the Number of congregational Churches in each Town; the Total of which in New-England appears to be about* 530, *incluſive of the presbyterian Churches.*

Province of the MASSACHUSETTS.

COUNTY of SUFFOLK.

REV. Dr Joſeph Sewall 12 Boſ-
rev Dr Charles Chauncy (TON
rev Dr Jonathan Mayhew
rev Thomas Foxcroft
rev Samuel Checkley
rev John Moorhead P.
rev Ebenezer Pemberton
rev Mather Byles
rev Samuel Mather
rev Andrew Croſwell
rev Andrew Eliot
rev Samuel Cooper
rev Samuel Checkley, jun.
rev Jeremiah Condy B.
rev Ephraim Bowns B.
Friends
rev Dr Timothy Cutler } E.
rev James Greaton }
rev Henry Caner } E.
rev John Troutback }
rev William Hooper E.
rev Ebenezer Gay 3 Hingham
rev John Brown
rev Daniel Shute
rev William Smith 2 Weymouth
rev James Bayley
rev Samuel Niles P. 3 Brantree
rev Anthony Wibert
rev Moſes Taft
rev Dr Miller E.
rev Samuel Veazy 1 Hull
rev Nathaniel Robbins 1 Milton
rev Nathaniel Bowman 1 Dorcheſter
rev Samuel Dunbar 3 Stoughton
—— —— E.
rev Jedidiah Adams
rev Philip Curtiſs
rev Joſeph Bean 2 Wrentham
—— vacant
rev Mr Barnum
rev Nathan Bucknam 2 Medway
rev David Thurſton
rev Jonathan Townſend 1 Medfield
rev Phillips Payſon 1 Walpole
rev Thomas Balch 4 Dedham
rev Andrew Tyler
rev Jaſon Haven
—— vacant
—— —— E.
rev Nathaniel Walter 2 Roxbury
rev Amos Adams
rev Jonathan Townſend 1 Needham
rev Elnathan White 1 Bellingham
—— —— B.
rev Philip Payſon 1 Chelſea
rev Joſeph Jackſon 1 Brookline
rev John Phillips 1 Caſtle-William

—
43

COUNTY of ESSEX.

Rev Peter Clark 5 Salem
rev James Dimon
rev Elias Smith
rev Dudley Leavit
rev Nathan Holt
rev Thomas Barnard
rev —— M'Gilchriſt E.
Friends
—— —— B
rev Nathaniel Henchman 3 Lynn
rev Joſeph Roby
rev Benjamin Adams
Friends
rev John Barnard 2 Marblehead
rev Simon Bradſtreet
rev Peter Bours E.
rev Joſeph Swain 1 Wenham
rev John Chipman 2 Beverly
rev Joſeph Champney

Rev

rev Sam'l Wigglesworth 7 Ipswich
rev John Walley
rev Nehemiah Porter
rev —— Lesly
rev Nathaniel Rogers
rev Alexander M Dowall
rev John Cleveland
rev Jedidiah Jewet 2 Rowley
rev James handler
rev John Emerson 1 Topsfield
rev John Lowel 6 Newbury
rev Jonathan Parsons P.
rev Edward Bass E.
rev John Tucker
rev Moses Parsons
rev William Johnson
rev Moses Hale
Friends
rev Samuel Webster 2 Salisbury
rev Edmund Noyes
rev Samuel Philips 2 Andover
rev William Symms
rev William Balch 2 Bradford
rev Joseph Parsons
rev —— Bailey 2 Methuen
rev Christopher Sargeant
rev Edward Barnard 6 Haverhill
rev James Cushing
rev Benjamin Parker
rev Samuel Bachelor
—— vacant
—— vacant
rev John Cushing 2 Boxford
rev Elizur Holyoke
rev Thomas Hibbard 2 Amsbury
rev Payn Wingat
Friends
* rev Joshua White } Glouceſter
rev Samuel Chandler } 5
rev John Rogers
rev Ebenezer Cleveland
rev —— Jaquish
rev Bradstreet
rev Benj Toppan 1 Manchester.

53

County of Middlesex.

Rev Nath'l Appleton 3 Cambridge
rev Samuel Cook
rev Ellis Apthorp E.
—— vacant
rev Hull Abbot } Charles-
rev Thomas Prentice } town 1
rev Seth Storer 1 Watertown
rev Daniel Bliss 1 Concord
rev Josiah Sherman 2 Woburn
rev Thomas Jones
rev William Hobby 2 Reading
—— vacant
rev Israel Loring 2 Sudbury
rev William Cook
rev Aaron Smith 1 Marlborough
rev Jonas Clark 1 Lexington
rev Jonas Miriam 1 Newtown
rev Joseph Emerson 2 Malden
rev Eliakim Willis
rev Ebenezer Bridge 1 Chelmsford
rev John Chandler 1 Billerica
rev Samuel Lock 1 Sherburn
rev Joshua Prentice 1 Hollisson
rev Caleb Trowbridge 3 Groton
rev Joseph Emerson
—— vacant
rev Matthew Bridge 1 Framingham
rev Ebenezer Turell 1 Medford
rev Henry Gardner 1 Stow
rev Josiah Goodhue 2 Dunstable
—— vacant
rev Thomas Parker 1 Dracut
rev John Searl 1 Stoneham
rev Daniel Rogers 1 Littleton
rev Samuel Barrett P. 1 Hopkinton
—— —— E.
rev Nathaniel Sherman 1 Bedford

rev Willard Hall 1 Weſford
rev Iſaac Morrell 1 Wilmington
rev Sampſon Spauldin 1 Tewkſbury
rev John Swift 1 Acton
rev Jacob Cuſhing 1 Waltham
* rev Phin. Hemingway 1 Townſend
rev Stephen Badger 2 Natick
—— vacant
rev William Lawrence 1 Lincoln

43

County of Worcester.

Rev Thad. Maccarty 1 Worceſter
rev Iſaac Jones 1 Weſtern
rev Eli Forbes 3 Brookfield
rev Joſeph Parſons
rev Nathan Fiſk
rev Joſeph Roberts 1 Leiceſter
rev Joſhua Eaton 1 Spencer
rev Thomas Green B. Friends
rev Job Cuſhing 2 Shrewſbury
rev Ebenezer Morſe
rev Ebenezer Parkman 2 Weſtboro'
rev John Martyn
rev Nathan Stone 1 Southborough
rev Charles Gleaſon 1 Dudley
rev John Campbel 1 Oxford
—— vacant 1 Charlton
—— vacant 1 Sturbridge
rev Mr Fiſh B.
rev David Hall 2 Sutton
rev James Welman
rev Mr Marſh B.
rev Aaron Hutchinſon 1 Grafton
rev Nathan Webb 1 Uxbridge Friends
rev Eliſha Fiſh
rev Joſeph Dorr 2 Mendon Friends
rev Amariah Froſt
—— —— B.
rev William Phipps 1 Douglaſs
rev David White 1 Hardwick
rev Benj. Ruggles 1 New-Brantree
rev James Humphries 1 Perquiage
rev Aaron Whitney 1 Peterſham
rev Thomas Frink 2 Rutland
rev Joſeph Buckminſter
—— vacant 1 Princetown
rev Joſeph Davis 1 Holden
—— vacant 1 Narraganſet No. 6.
—— vacant 1 Weſtminſter
rev Tim. Harrington 2 Lancaſter
rev John Mellen
rev John Rogers 1 Leominſter
rev Thomas Goſs 1 Bolton
rev Joſeph Wheeler 1 Harvard
* rev David Stearns 1 Lunenburgh
rev Jonathan Wincheſter 1 Dorcheſter-Canada
—— vacant 1 Ipſwich-Canada
rev Lemuel Hedge 1 Roxbury-Canada

43

County of Hampshire.

Rev Jonathan Aſhley 1 Deerfield
* rev Mr Billings 1 Greenfield
rev Joſeph Aſhly 1 Sunderland
rev Judah Naſh 1 Montague
rev Samuel Hopkins 1 Hadley
rev John Woodbridge 1 So Hadley
rev Mr Parſons 1 Amherſt
rev Tim. Woodbridge 1 Hatfield
rev John Hooker 2 Northampton
rev Mr Judd
rev Mr Cutler 1 Quobbin
rev Stephen Williams 6 Springfield
rev Robert Breck
rev Noah Merick
rev John M'Kinſtry
rev Elijah Lothrop
—— vacant
—— —— B.

rev

Rev John Ballantine 1 Weſtfield
rev Mr Bridgham 2 Brimfield
—— vacant
—— vacant B.
rev Jedidiah Smith 1 Granville
rev Mr Morton 1 Blanford
rev Mr Strong 1 New-Marlboro'
rev Mr Jones 1 No. 3.
rev Ebenezer Martin 1 No. 4.
rev Stephen Weſt 1 Stockbridge
—— vacant 1 Falltown
rev Jonathan Hubbard 2 Sheffield
rev Samuel Hopkins
rev Jeſſe Clark 1 Spencer
—— vacant 1 Egremont
rev Juſtus Forward 1 Coldſpring
rev Abraham Hill 1 Rhodetown
rev Mr M'Dole 1 Colerane
rev Ezra Thayer 1 Ware-River
rev Adonijah Bidwel 1 No. 1.
rev Mr Abercrombie 1 Pelham
—— vacant 1 Weſthoſuck
—— vacant 1 Pontooſac
—— vacant 1 Palmer
rev John Hubbard 1 Northfield

40

County of Plymouth.

Rev Jacob Bacon 3 Plymouth
rev Chandler Robbins
—— vacant
rev William Rand 1 Kingſton
rev Charles Turner 1 Duxbury
rev Atherton Wales 2 Marſhfield
rev Thomas Brown
—— —— E.
rev Sherjaſhub Bourn 2 Scituate
rev David Barns
rev Mr Thompſon E.
rev Samuel Baldwin 1 Hanover
rev Gad Hitchcock
rev Thomas Smith 1 Pembroke
Friends
rev Mr Dodge 1 Abington
rev Daniel Perkins 5 Bridgwater
rev John Angier
rev John Shaw
rev John Porter
rev Solomon Read
rev Jonathan Parker 2 Plymton
rev John Howland
rev Sylvanus Conant 2 Middleboro'
—— vacant
rev Ebenezer Hinds B.
rev Iſaac Backus B.
rev Roland Thatcher 1 Wareham
rev Timothy Ruggles 3 Rocheſter
rev Ivory Hovey
rev Thomas Weſt
rev Mr Patten 1 Halifax

27

County of Bristol.

Rev Joſiah Crocker 1 Taunton
—— —— E.
Friends
* rev Mr White 3 Norton
rev Joſeph Palmer
rev Mr Carpenter
—— vacant 2 Eaſton
—— vacant
—— vacant 1 Dartmouth
Friends 4 meetings
rev Silas Brett 1 Freetown
Friends
rev Samuel Toby 1 Berkley
rev Nathan Fiſher 1 Dighton
rev John Wales 1 Raynham
rev Mr Wood B. Swanzy
rev Job Maſon B. }
rev Ruſſel Maſon B. }
Friends
rev Abijah Welde 2 Attleborough

Rev

Rev Peter Thatcher
rev Mr Carnes 3 Rehoboth
rev Mr Rogerſon
rev Mr Peck
rev Daniel Martin B.
rev Nathan Pierce B.
rev Mr Rounds B.

16

County of Barnstable.

Rev Caleb Upham 1 Truro
—— —— B.
rev Iſaiah Lewis 3 Eaſtham
rev Edward Cheever
rev Joſeph Crocker
rev Stephen Emery 1 Chatham
rev Joſiah Dennis 2 Yarmouth
rev Grindal Rawſon
rev Iſaiah Dunſtar 2 Harwich
rev John Dennis
—— vacant
rev Mr Chaſe B.
rev Joſeph Green 2 Barnſtable
rev Mr Shaw
rev Abraham Williams 1 Sandwich
Friends
rev Gideon Hawley } Maſhpee
rev Sol. Bryant, Ind. } 1
rev Samuel Palmer 1 Falmouth
Friends

14

County of Dukes County.

Rev Andrew Boardman 1 Chilmark
—— vacant Tiſbury
—— vacant 1 Edgarton
Indian Church 1 Gayhead
rev Zech. Mayhew 1 Chriſtiantown
Friends — Nantucket
—— vacant 1

5

County of York.

Rev Iſaac Lyman 2 York
rev Samuel Lanckton
rev Benjamin Stevens 3 Kittery
rev John Rogers
rev Joſiah Chaſe
rev Jacob Foſter 2 Berwick
rev John Morſs
Friends
rev Mr Hemingway 2 Wells
rev Mr Little
rev John Hovey 1 Arundel
rev Moſes Morrel 1 Biddeford

11

County of Cumberland.

Rev Thomas Smith 3 Falmouth
rev John Wiſwall
rev Ephraim Clark
Friends
rev Nicholas Loring 2 Yarmouth
rev Eliſha Eaton
Friends
rev Richard Elvin 2 Scarborough
—— vacant
rev Mr Dunlap 1 Brunſwick
—— —— 1 Gorhamtown.

9

County of Lincoln.

Rev Mr Bailey E. Pownalborough
—— vacant 1 Georgetown
—— vacant 1 Woolwich
—— vacant 1 Newcaſtle.

3

Total of congregational churches in province of Maſſachuſetts, 306.
In year 1749 they were * 250.

* *Summary hiſt. V. 1. P. 542.*

Colony

COLONY of CONNECTICUT.

COUNTY of NEW-HAVEN.

Rev Joſeph Noyes 8 } New-
rev Chauncy Whittelſey } Haven
* Iſaac Stiles
—— —— E.
rev Ebenezer Sunderſon E.
rev Benjamin Woodbridge
rev Samuel Bird
rev Naphtali Dagget
Nicholas Street
rev Noah Williſton
—— —— E.
—— vacant
rev Samuel Whittelſey 2 Milford
rev Job Prudden P.
rev Thomas Ruggles } 5 Guilford
rev Amos Fowler }
rev Jonathan Todd
rev James Sprout
rev John Richards
rev Richard Ely
—— —— E.
rev Jonathan Merick 3 Branford
rev Philemon Robbins
rev Warham Williams
rev Samuel Hall 4 Wallingford
rev Theophilus Hall
rev James Dana
—— vacant
—— —— E.
—— —— B.
rev Elizur Goodrich 1 Durham
rev Daniel Humphry 2 Darby
rev Jonathan Lyman
rev Richard Mansfield E.
rev Samuel Todd 3 Waterbury
—— —— E.
rev Mark Leavenworth
rev James Scovel E.
rev John Trumble —

COUNTY of HARTFORD.

Rev Elnathan Whitman 4 Hartford
rev Edward Dorr
rev Eliphalet Williams
rev Nathaniel Hooker
rev Daniel Ruſſel 3 Weathersfield
rev James Lockwood
rev Joſhua Belding
rev Hezekiah Biſſel 7 Windſor
rev William Ruſſel, jun.
rev Thomas Potwine
rev Joſeph Perry
rev Seth Norton
—— vacant
—— vacant
rev William Ruſſel 6 Middleton
rev Moſes Bartlit
rev Edward Eells
rev Benjamin Bowers
rev John Norton
rev Ichabod Camp E.
—— vacant
rev Samuel Newel 7 Farmington
—— —— E.
rev Timothy Pitkin
rev Ebenezer Booge
rev Samuel Clark
rev Benjamin Chapman
rev John Smalley
—— vacant
rev William Gibbs E. Symſbury
rev Joſeph Strong 3
rev Jeſſe Roots
—— vacant
rev Eleazar May 1 Haddam
rev Grindal Rawſon 3 E. Haddam
rev Hobart Eaſtabrook
rev Joſeph Fowler
rev Ephraim Little 4 Colcheſter
rev Thomas Skinner

rev

Rev Elijah Maſon
—— vacant
rev Benjamin Pomroy 3 Hebron
rev Samuel Lockwood
rev Elijah Lothrop
rev Samuel Peters E
rev Iſaac Chalker 2 Glaſſenbury
rev John Eells
rev Peter Raynolds 1 Enfield
rev Ebenezer Gay 2 Suffield
rev John Graham jun.
rev Freegrace Leavitt 1 Somers
rev Thomas White 1 Bolton
rev Mr Willard 1 Stafford
rev Gideon Noble 1 Willington
rev Nathan Williams 1 Tolland

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County of Fairfield.

Rev John Beach E Fairfield
rev Noah Hobart 5
rev Joſeph Lamſon E
rev Daniel Buckingham
rev Nathaniel Bartlit
rev Samuel Sherwood
rev Seth Pomroy
rev Jedidiah Mills 4 Stratford
rev Chriſtopher Newton E
rev James Beebee
rev Izrahiah Wetmore
rev Edward Winſlow E
rev Robert Roſs
—— —— E
rev Moſes Dickenſon 3 Norwalk
rev Jeremiah Leaming E
rev William Gaylord
rev Robert Silliman
rev Ebenezer Dibble E Stanford
rev Benjamin Strong 3
rev Moſes Mather
rev Noah Welles
rev Abraham Todd 2 Greenwich
—— vacant
rev Ebenezer White 1 Danbury
rev David Judſon 2 Newtown
rev Thomas Brooks
rev Jonathan Ingerſoll 1 Ridgfield
rev Eliſha Kent 3 Newfairfield
rev Elijah Sill
rev James Taylor

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County of New-London.

Rev Math. Greaves E. N London
rev David Jewit 2
rev Mather Byles
—— —— —— B
rev Benjamin Lord 6 Norwich
— — — — — E
rev Jabez Wight
rev Benjamin Throop
rev Peter Powers
rev John Ellis
—— vacant
rev Jared Eliott 2 Killingworth
rev William Seward
rev William Hart 4 Saybrook
rev Stephen Holmes
rev John Devotion
rev Simeon Stoddard
rev George Griſwold 3 Lyme
rev George Beckwith
rev Stephen Johnſon
rev Jacob Johnſon 2 Groton
—— —— —— E
rev Mr Barber
rev Valentine Wightman B
rev Eben. Roſſeter 3 Stonington
rev Nathaniel Eells
rev Joſeph Fiſh
rev Hezekiah Lord 2 Preſton
rev Aſhur Roſſeter

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COUNTY of WINDHAM.

Rev Samuel Moſely 3 Windham
rev Ebenezer Devotion
rev Stephen White
rev Solomon Williams 3 Lebanon
rev Jacob Eliot
rev Eleazer Wheelock
rev David Rowland 1 Plainfield
rev James Cogſwell 1 Canterbury
rev Richard Salter 2 Mansfield
rev Daniel Welch
rev Nathan Strong 2 Coventry
rev Oliver Noble
rev Abel Stiles 3 Woodſtock
rev Stephen Williams, jun.
—— vacant
rev David Ripley 2 Pomfret
rev Aaron Putnam
rev Aaron Brown 3 Killingly
rev Noadiah Ruſſel
rev Eden Burroughs
rev Timothy Allen 1 Aſhford
rev Samuel Durance P. 1 Volentown
rev Mr Horton 1 Union
rev Joſiah Whitney 1 Mortlake.

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COUNTY of LITCHFIELD.

Rev Judah Champion 1 Litchfield
rev Solomon Palmer E.
* rev. Anthony Stoddard 4 Woodbury
rev John Graham
rev Thomas Canfield
rev Daniel Brinſmade
rev Nathaniel Taylor 2 New-Milford
— — — — E.
— — vacant
Friends
rev Andrew Bartholemew 1 Harwinton
rev Jonathan Marſh 1 New Hartford
rev Jeſſe Ives 1 Norfolk
rev Daniel Farrand 1 Canaan
rev Jonathan Lee 1 Saliſbury
rev Noah Wadham 4 Kent
rev Joel Bardwell
rev Mr Oſborn
rev Mr Tredwel
rev Cotton Mather Smith 1 Sharon
rev Hezekiah Gould 1 Cornwal
rev Abel Newel 1 Goſhen
rev Natha. Roberts 1 Torrington

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Total of congregational churches in the colony of Connect. 170
A. D. 1749 ſaid to be about 120
But more probably 135

In the year 1760 died 10 of the paſtors; 18 ordained, including one inſtalment; and 6 new churches gathered, whoſe pariſhes are included in this liſt. At the end of the year, I think there are 15 of theſe parochial congregations whoſe churches are not formed, viz. 10 for Maſſachuſetts, and 5 for Connecticut. So that while the total of parochial congregations is 530, the total of churches is 515 for the end of the year 1760. If the total of churches in 1749 was but 407, as Dr. Douglaſs aſſerts, we have multiplied 108 churches in 12 years.

PROVINCE of NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

REV. Arthur Brown E. Portſmouth.
rev Samuel Langdon 2
rev Samuel Haven
rev Marmeduke Brown E
rev Woodbridge Odlin 2 Exeter
rev Daniel Rogers
rev Ward Cotton 4 Hampton
rev Joſiah Baily
rev Jeremiah Fog
rev Nathaniel Gookin
Friends
* rev William Allen } 1 Green-
rev Samuel M'Clintoc } land
rev Stephen Chaſe 1 Newcaſtle
rev Samuel Parſon 1 Rye
rev Joſeph Adams 1 Newington
rev Joſeph Adams 1 Stratham
* rev Joſeph Secomb 2 Kingſton
rev Peter Coffin
rev Wm. Parſons 1 Southampton
rev Joſiah Cotton 1 Sandown
rev Ebenezer Flagg 2 Cheſter
rev Mr Wilſon P
rev David M'Gregore P 2 Londonderry.
rev Mr Daviſon P
rev Timothy Walker 1 Rumford
rev Daniel Wilkins P 1 Souhegan
rev Daniel Emerſon 1 Hollis
rev Mr. Merril 1 Nottingham
rev Mr. Stearns 1 Eppen
rev Nathaniel Traſk 1 Brentwood
rev Jonathan Cuſhing 1 Dover
Friends
rev John Tuck 1 Goſport
rev Mr Pike 1 Somerſworth
Friends
rev Ezra Carpenter 1 Aſhwelot
rev John Moody 1 Newmarket
rev John Adams 1 Durham
rev Mr Prince 1 Madbury
rev Jonathan Eames 2 Newton
rev Benjamin Butler
rev Mr Hobbs 1 Pelham
rev Mr Bailey 1 Salem
rev Mr Hughſton P. 1 Merrimack
rev Mr M'Dowal 1 Goffs-Town
rev Mr Scales 1 Hopkinton
rev Mr Whittemore 1 Suncook
rev Mr Kingaid P
rev Mr Hill 1 Rocheſter

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A. D. 1749 about 30

COLONY of RHODE-ISLAND and PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS.

FRiends NEWPORT
rev Thomas Pollen E.
rev Edward Upham B.
rev John Maxſon B. Sabb.
rev William Vinal 1
rev Ezra Stiles 1
rev Gardner Thurſton B.
Moravian
Synagogue
rev Samuel Windſor B. PROVI-
rev Mr Greaves E. (DENCE
rev Joſeph Snow 1
—— vacant 1
Friends

Friends

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Friends Portſmouth
rev Charles Holden B. Warwick
rev Benjamin Pierce B.
Friends
—— —— E.
rev Joſeph Park I Weſterly
Friends
rev Samuel Aldborough B. North-Kingſton
Friends South-Kingſton
rev Joſeph Torrey I
rev Samuel Fayerweather E.
rev James Rogers B.
—— vacant B.
—— vacant I New-Shoreham
rev John Gorton B. Eaſt-Green-
Friends (wich
Friends Jameſtown
rev John Windſor B. Smithfield
Friends
—— vacant B. Scituate
rev David Mitchel B. Glouceſter
Friends Charleſtown
rev Benjamin Gardner B. Weſt-Greenwich
rev Peter Worden B. Coventry
—— vacant B. Exeter.
rev John Uſher E. Briſtol
rev John Burt I
rev Othniel Campbell I Tiverton.
rev David Rounds B.
Friends
rev Jona. Ellis I Little-Compton
rev Timothy Brown I
Friends
rev Mr Townſend I Warren
rev Mr Maxwell
rev Mr Cook B. Cumberland
Friends Richmond
rev Tho. Burlingham B. Cranſton
Friends
rev Thomas Hiſcox } B. Sabb.
rev Thomas Clark } Hopkinton
Friends.

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